DECEMBER 24, 2001

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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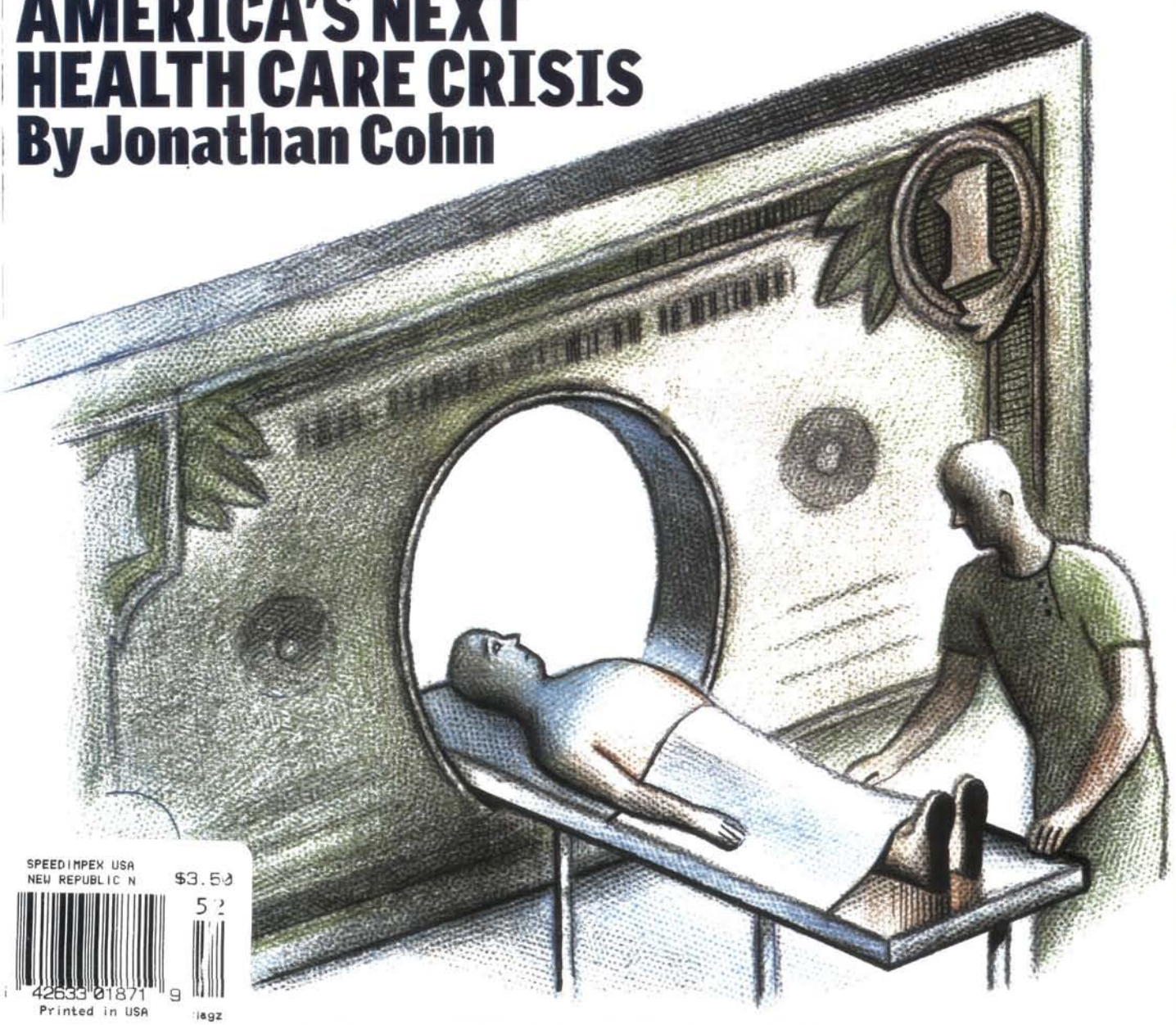

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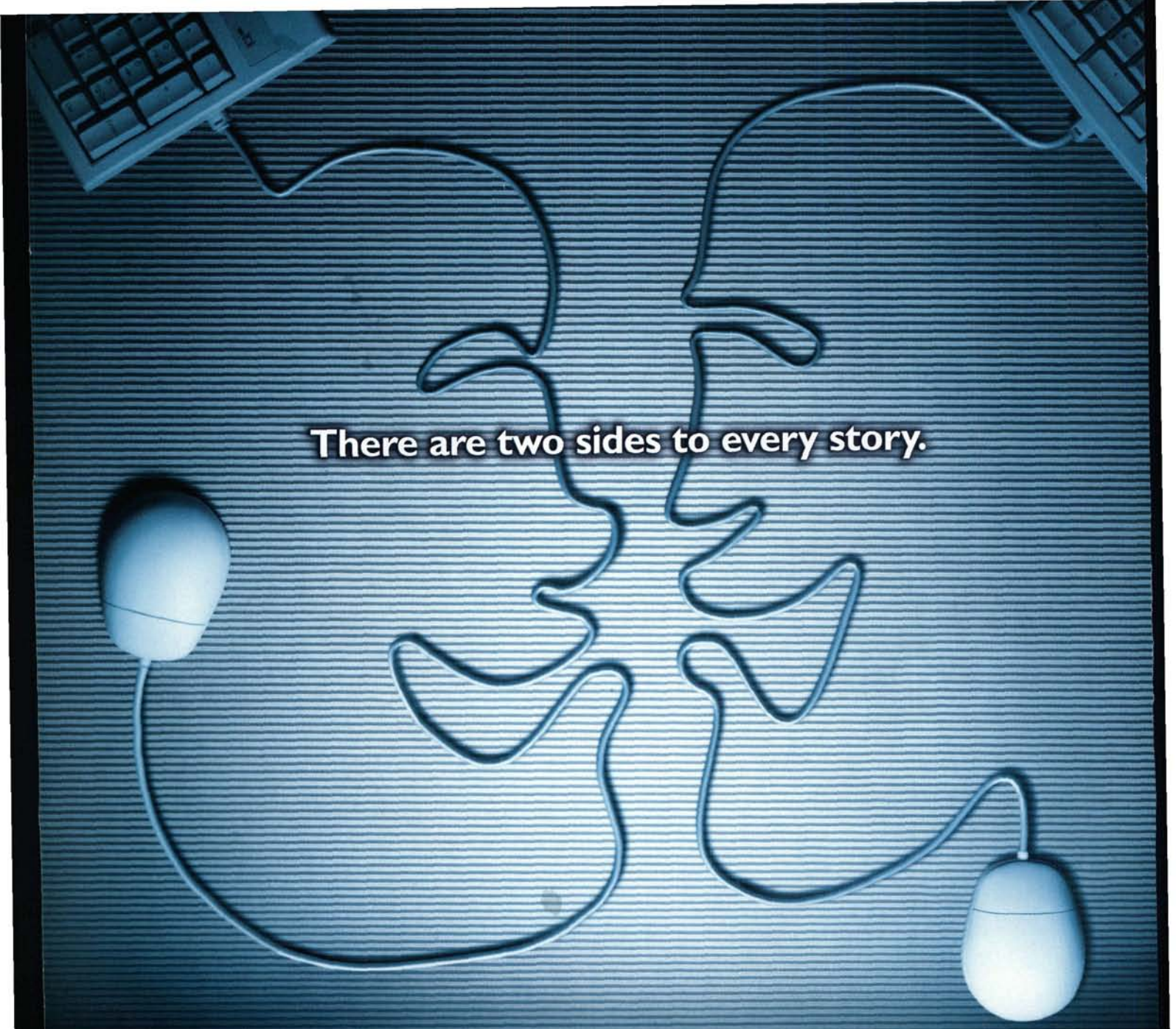

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

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4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Does Joe Klein read THE NEW REPUBLIC? &c.

6 **PETER BEINART** TRB: FORCE FIELD America v. the future of Afghanistan.

7 **THE EDITORS** TRADE OFF Fast track and the abdication of the New Democrats.

8 **NOTEBOOK** John Ashcroft's war record, &c.

10 **RYAN LIZZA** WHITE HOUSE WATCH: POWER HOUSE Why W. loves presidential power.

12 **RICHARD MINITER** HAMBURG DISPATCH: CELL BLOCK The rise of the German right.

13 **ELIZABETH RUBIN** KANDAHAR DISPATCH: GOING SOUTH Chez Mullah Omar.

15 **LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN** ARABIAN FIGHTS The Saudis put the screws on Bush.

17 **ROB WALKER** CONFIDENCE GAME Can anyone really measure how consumers feel?

19 **JONATHAN COHN** HEALTH SCARE Health care costs are going through the roof, people are losing their insurance in droves, and a political earthquake is about to hit Washington. Sound like what happened in the early 1990s? Actually, it's what's happening today.

24 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: DOING IT WELL *Spy Game* and *Behind Enemy Lines* prove that Hollywood is still a battleground for great talents.

26 **RICHARD TARUSKIN** DOUBLE TROUBLE Twenty-six years after Shostakovich's death, the debate over his legacy only deepens. Was he a dissident or a propagandist? Or both?

34 **SIMON BLACKBURN** TO FEEL AND FEEL NOT *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* by Martha C. Nussbaum

38 **LAURIE LAMON** POEM *Pain Thinks of the Hand*

39 **RONALD RADOSH** THE UNTRUE BELIEVER *The Brother: The Untold Story of Atomic Spy David Greenglass and How He Sent His Sister, Ethel Rosenberg, to the Electric Chair* by Sam Roberts

42 **SARAH WILDMAN** WASHINGTON DIARIST: ALL FOR ONE

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CORRESPONDENCE

Carry on

TO THE EDITORS:

Of course lobbyist Kenneth Quinn has it only half right when he argues that airport security firms do a perfectly good job of enforcing the law, but that the laws themselves are too lax (Notebook, November 19). But it is hardly a logical contradiction for "conservatives" to take the same line just because they also agree with the National Rifle Association's argument that we need to better enforce the gun laws we already have rather than enact new ones. The security failure on 9/11 was not by baggage screeners, since the edged weapons used by the terrorists were legal for carry-on. The proximate cause was a failure of both law and policy regarding weapons and hijacking—what might be called the "roll over and give it up" syndrome, based on the aversion to violent resistance to criminal (versus terrorist) attack so often articulated by THE NEW REPUBLIC and like-minded folks. Massacres are more likely to occur in our so-called "gun-free zones" than in venues where the crazies and bad guys have reason to fear immediate retaliation from their intended victims.

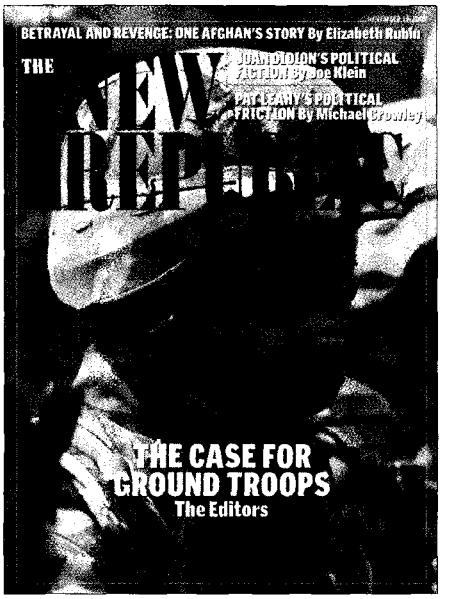
WILLIAM J. DURR
Cornwallville, New York

Lightning strikes

TO THE EDITORS:

There is something exceedingly strange about the insistence of TNR's editors that the United States should soon commit massive military ground forces to Afghanistan ("Hit the Ground," November 19). If we have masses of semi-raw recruits in Afghanistan, we will certainly have the same situation we had in Vietnam: prostitution, STDs, rampant drug use, cultural misunderstandings, rapes, some accidental deaths and injuries on both sides, and ultimately the enmity of much of the civilian population. Obviously these conditions would likely give the Taliban a new lease on life. Do the editors really want to see another quagmire, with death and misery on both sides, extending into the indefinite future? The judicious use of American bombing, elite forces, and encouragement of the Northern Alliance and non-Taliban Pashtuns *does* seem to be effective.

Why are you so unhappy with the idea of working with indigenous and nearby forces that hate the Taliban? Could it be because our fragile but, so far, effective coalition includes some Muslim states that are unhappy with the situation in Israel—so that one of the outcomes of a


BETRAYAL AND REVENGE: ONE AFGHAN'S STORY By Elizabeth Rubin
THE
JOAN DIDION'S POLITICAL FICTION By Joe Klein
PAT LEARY'S POLITICAL FRICTION By Michael Crowley
THE CASE FOR GROUND TROOPS
The Editors

U.S. victory achieved with their aid might be a more balanced U.S. stance on the Israeli-Palestinian situation? If so, you are hypocrites, willing to trade American lives to aid a foreign power.

JOHN D. PALMER
Charleston, West Virginia

Birth rites

TO THE EDITORS:

One of the main reasons for caesarean sections in the United States is the epidural ("Push and Pull," by Hope Roberts, November 19). Women can have instantaneous bad reactions to it, including fevers, shaking, and nausea. The labor can slow and refuse to proceed, even with the drug Pitocin jointly administered. The epidural can also affect the child, slowing down his or her heart rate. We spend nine months avoiding the tiniest bit of alcohol, yet we consent to a catheter with pain-relievers so we can avoid the pain of birth.

KELLY MOONEY
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITORS:

Necessary c-sections are one thing. But perhaps if Hope Roberts had known that c-section babies, at birth, have significantly lower levels of adrenaline and noradrenaline than do vaginally delivered babies, she many not have been so quick to have a potentially unnecessary c-section. These hormones enhance cell metabolism, circulation of blood to the brain, and activity level, and they facilitate respiration by helping to keep the lungs open and clear.

DR. ALAN C. MILLER
Gainesville, Florida

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Left hook

TO THE EDITORS:

In "Bulworthism," a review of Joan Didion's *Political Fictions*, Joe Klein asserts that, as a nation, we are indeed well past the "time when allegedly serious news organizations and journals of opinion turned to cynics and stylists—people who knew little about politics and nothing at all about policy—to make pronouncements about public life.... When reality visits," Klein writes, referring to the events of September 11, "there is no need for political fictions" (November 19). Doesn't Joe Klein read the magazine for which he writes—specifically THE NEW REPUBLIC's Idiocy Watch (Notebook)?

In a series reporting only the worst offenders, I count at least 20 unmistakably idiotic pronouncements by "cynics and stylists" that were run by "allegedly serious news organizations and journals of opinion," including ABC, CNN, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Nation*, and *National Review Online*. Unfortunately, nothing has more pointedly reinforced the premise of Didion's *Political Fictions* than the rash of inane and superficial news stories and commentaries over the past three months.

JOE CUOMO
English Department
Queens College
City University of New York
Flushing, New York

TO THE EDITORS:

Congratulations to Joe Klein for his evisceration of Joan Didion and the fanciful politics and cynical, elitist condescension to the United States for which she stands. One of the effects of the tragedy of September 11 has been the movement of American political discourse—even now partly poisoned by the America-hating of the New Left—in the direction of a more decent and mature realism about the virtues of our democracy, our government, and our people to balance the unending disparagement of all three by upper-class "leftists" whose criticism has never offered anything more profound, or truthful, than the expression of vanity it has always so transparently been.

FRED WHITE
Baltimore, Maryland

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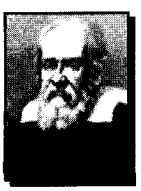
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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Force Field

HERE WE GO again. Two months ago President Bush said America "should learn a lesson from the previous engagement in the Afghan area—that we should not just simply leave after a military objective has been achieved." An administration official told *The New York Times* that while Bush remained reluctant to keep U.S. troops in Afghanistan for too long after the Taliban fell, "he knows that the only way to keep this powder keg from going up again is that the United States and its allies will have to make a long-term commitment of money and of people." Asked about Bush's repeated denunciations of "nation-building" during last fall's campaign, another aide told the *Times*, "that seems a century ago."

It doesn't seem a century ago anymore. In fact, in the last couple of weeks, the Bushies have been sounding a lot like the Bushies of old. When the war started and the administration was courting world opinion, it insisted it wouldn't abandon Afghanistan once the Taliban was overthrown. But now that the Taliban actually are overthrown, there is mounting evidence that abandoning postwar Afghanistan is exactly what this White House has in mind.

Consider the diplomatic tussle over an international peacekeeping force. In November, after the Northern Alliance conquered most of Northern Afghanistan, Tony Blair quickly readied 6,000 British troops to go into recently liberated areas and guarantee the safe passage of humanitarian aid. Blair's urgency was understandable. After all, relief groups estimated that between 5 and 7.5 million Afghans were at risk of starvation. U.S. airdrops of food had reached only about 1 percent of them, and the oncoming winter made delivery of supplies more difficult. But Blair's troops waited, and waited, and waited. And gradually it became clear that American opposition was holding things up. The Pentagon explained that it didn't want peacekeepers in Afghanistan while the United States was still fighting the Taliban—even though the United States was fighting mostly in the South, and the British wanted to enter pockets of the North where the Taliban were already vanquished.

But as headlines like "ONSET OF WINTER 'COULD BE A DEATH SENTENCE' FOR MANY REFUGEES" began filling the newspapers, the Bushies tried a different spin: They weren't holding up a peacekeeping force; the Afghans were. "Peacekeeping and peacekeepers have to be issues decided by the Afghan people," insisted an unnamed U.S. military official to *The New York Times*. But three of the four Afghan delegations that met on November 27 in Bonn to cobble together a future government said that an international peacekeeping force was exactly what they wanted. And by the conference's end, even the fourth delegation—the Northern Alliance—had accepted the idea.

So the Bush administration shifted its efforts from preventing a peacekeeping force to making sure one was as weak as possible. American officials demanded that the troops be confined to Kabul and its vicinity. They tried to limit the size of the deployment. And they repeatedly insisted that Americans would not take part. In fact, U.S. objections are much of the reason the force won't be fully installed by December 22, the day Hamid Karzai's pre-government takes over in Kabul.

While the United States has delayed and obstructed, the humanitarian situation has remained awful. In Mazar-e-Sharif, Northern Alliance troops have looted UNICEF convoys and ransacked UN food warehouses. The World Food Program says banditry is so widespread that it can't convince truckers to transport food into the country. The International Rescue Committee won't send its staff into Afghanistan because it can't guarantee their safety. As Raymond Offenheiser, director of Oxfam, told *The New York Times*, "It's a no-brainer to say that we need an international force to get those desperately needed supplies to the people."

That force is particularly needed in the chaotic northern provinces surrounding Mazar-e-Sharif, where a mishmash of warlords control, and don't control, security on the ground. Because the United States has insisted that an international force restrict itself to the area around Kabul, however, peacekeepers probably won't be able to ensure that assistance reaches the suffering.

But the biggest problem with America's continuing effort to emasculate an international peacekeeping force is not humanitarian; it's political. Recent Afghan history makes two things clear. First, if the Northern Alliance dominates the new government to the exclusion of Pashtuns, there will be civil war. Second, if the Northern Alliance controls the streets of Kabul, it will dominate the new government. Under the agreement signed in Bonn, the Northern Alliance must remove its troops from the capital—and any militias that remain must be disarmed. But international warnings didn't keep Northern Alliance troops from going into Kabul, and they won't make them leave unless they're backed up by a military force tough enough to stare down the Northern Alliance. And the longer that force takes to arrive, the harder the Alliance will be to dislodge.

Why doesn't the Bush administration seem to care? The Bushies can't seriously believe their own rhetoric about not wanting to interfere in internal Afghan affairs—after all, last week Karzai, the closest thing Afghanistan has to a legitimate leader, practically begged the United States to do just that. And as the Taliban and Al Qaeda retreat to ever smaller, and more remote, corners of the country, the military's claims that a peacekeeping force would hinder the prosecution of the war make less and less sense as well.

My guess is that those are just pretexts. The military has always hated nation-building; it thinks "social work" saps strength and undermines morale. And Republican administrations are strongly predisposed to believe that the way to win wars is to defer to the military as much as possible—that's the lesson they take from Vietnam. What's more, the Bush administration politicos surely realize that this new era of foreign policy preeminence makes the military a crucial Republican constituency—it was Ronald Reagan's association with a strong military, after all, that gave him his patriotic aura during the cold war. Over the last month, the Bush administration's efforts to convince the world that it cares about Afghanistan's reconstruction have run smack into the military's insistence that it not be involved in Afghanistan's reconstruction. And the results have not been surprising.

The problem is that nation-building really *is* necessary. (Witness all the concern that Al Qaeda might migrate to Somalia.) Part of what it means to say that this is a "different kind of war" is that—like the cold war—it is both a real war and a metaphorical one. It will require a great deal of tedious, un-macho "social work" to prevent the anarchy and despair on which terrorism feeds. And in certain shattered and dangerous countries, that work will have to be done not simply by outsiders, but by outside armies. As one British diplomat put it, explaining the squabble between the U.S. and the U.K. over an international force for Afghanistan, "We think that war-fighting and peacekeeping are part of the same thing, and they don't." In other words, the Brits understand this new world we now inhabit, and the Bushies don't.

PETER BEINART

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Trade Off

POOR CHARLIE RANGEL. For years he and other pro-trade Democrats worked tirelessly to pass a bill lowering tariffs on Caribbean and Latin American textiles. Last May they succeeded, and the early impact of the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA) has been impressive: U.S. exports of yarn and fabric increased 12 percent in 2000; textile-exporting countries like the Dominican Republic have added thousands of jobs. But it all came undone last Thursday. With time winding down in a razor-close House vote on fast-track trade promotion authority—a measure that Rangel and most other normally pro-trade Democrats opposed—Republican leaders gutted the CBTPA to attract enough protectionist-minded GOPers to ensure the bill's passage. By opposing a free-trade bill they claimed they didn't like, Rangel and Co. ruined one they did. Surely that wasn't the plan.

Why, out of 72 ostensible New Democrats and many more who are supposedly sympathetic to trade, did only 21 vote for fast track? The first objection was that it was unfair for the House to consider trade before it took care of the recently unemployed. Never mind that freer trade creates more jobs than it destroys. Republicans still needed "to understand the genuine anxiety, uncertainty, and struggle that millions of our fellow citizens confront today," in the words of Representative Ellen Tauscher, head of the House's Democratic Business Forum. But that argument collapsed the day before the vote, when House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas promised to allocate at least $20 billion of any upcoming stimulus bill to workers, an additional $2 billion to Americans left jobless by the September 11 attacks, and a longer time limit on unemployment benefits for workers displaced by free trade.

So the "pro-trade" Democrats fell back on obscure procedural arguments. Representative Robert Matsui—who, by his own accounting, had voted in favor of every previous piece of trade legislation that had come up in his 23 years in Congress—complained that under fast track, only "four hours of debate on the floor of the House" would be allocated for future trade agreements. Actually, the bill allows up to 20 hours of debate on the House floor—longer than most legislation—and up to 45 days of debate in committee, where the real work happens anyway.

If it wasn't about the unemployed, and it wasn't about procedure, why did the New Dems vote no? You can see the real reason in the behavior of Marion Berry, an obscure congressman from Arkansas. A frequent supporter of free trade, Berry was all set to vote for fast track when House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt made what turned out to be an offer he couldn't refuse: the inside track for a coveted seat on the House Appropriations Committee. Berry, won over, voted no.

Indeed, over the last several years, the fate of trade legislation has tracked pretty closely with Gephardt's state of mind. In 1997 Gephardt lobbied his colleagues vigorously against similar legislation, and the vote was canceled because Bill Clinton couldn't muster up enough Democrats for passage. Three years later, however, when Gephardt reportedly "released" his caucus to vote their conscience on permanent normal trade relations with China, 73 Democrats voted yes and the measure passed. Gephardt is in an awkward position. On the one hand, House Democrats desperately need the support of high-tech businesses if they're to have any chance of neutralizing the Republican fundraising advantage. On the other, Gephardt knows that crossing big labor is the one foolproof way to ensure he never becomes speaker. So Gephardt bobs and weaves his caucus through these various trade votes, alternately alienating business and labor, depending on which interest pushes harder at any given time.

The problem is that what's good for the House Democratic leadership isn't necessarily good for the country. According to a recent University of Michigan study cited by *The Washington Post*, the value to Americans of a new multilateral trade agreement, in terms of increased exports and cheaper goods for consumers, would be some $600 billion. That vastly outweighs the sum total of wages from jobs that would be lost. By opposing trade, therefore, House Democrats are effectively telling Americans that they value the jobs of a comparatively tiny number of politically influential workers in a handful of industries and regions over the good of the entire population. Or, put differently, that they'd prefer to lavish benefits on a small, exclusive minority at the expense of the vast majority of Americans. They had better hope the vast majority of Americans aren't paying attention. ■

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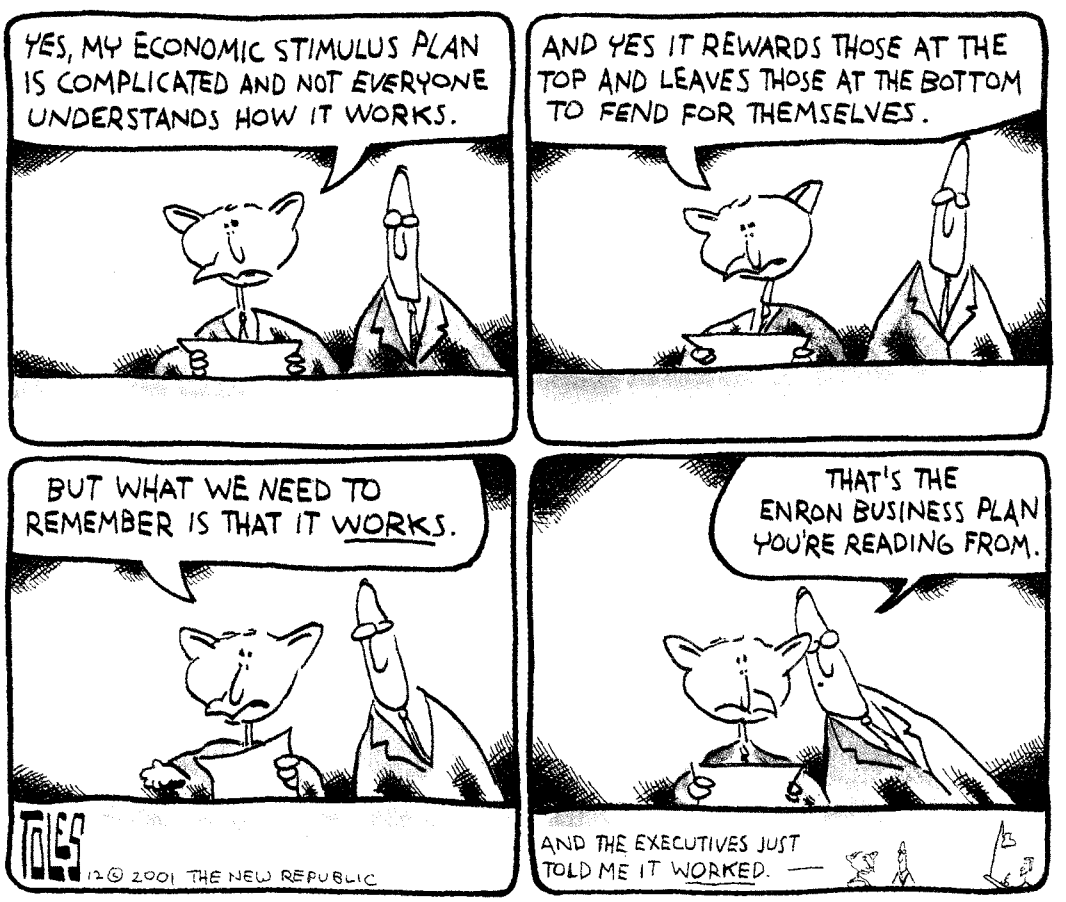
NOTEBOOK

AND THEY CALL HIM GENERAL: John Ashcroft's testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee last week—during which he declared that his critics "only aid terrorists, for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve"—was despicable. And not just for the obvious reasons. Ashcroft, you see, is the last person who should be accusing others of undermining a war effort, given his own sorry performance during the Vietnam War. While attending Yale and then the University of Chicago Law School in the 1960s, Ashcroft repeatedly sought and received student deferments from his local draft board in Springfield, Missouri. In this, Ashcroft was hardly unique. But, as *The Boston Globe* reported last January, when Ashcroft graduated from law school in 1967 he took the far less common step of seeking an occupational deferment granted to those who hold critical civilian jobs. (Out of 35 million men registered with the Selective Service in 1967, only 264,000 received occupational deferments.) The "critical" job in question? Teaching business law to undergrads at Southwest Missouri State University—an assignment he lined up with the help of a family friend. Although Ashcroft's draft board had already earmarked him for induction—indeed, Ashcroft had already passed his pre-induction physical—the board reversed itself and granted the deferment, and Ashcroft spent the rest of the Vietnam War in Missouri, safe and sound. And quiet: Although Ashcroft was clearly eager to avoid going to Vietnam, he never protested the war. At least those people Ashcroft now brands traitors have the courage to voice their dissent.

SO MUCH FOR CHANGING THE TONE: "Nobody trusts anyone, and everyone thinks everyone else had an ulterior motive." —one congressional aide's description of the stimulus battle, *The Washington Post*, December 12

FLOPAGANDA: After September 11, clash-of-civilizations-averse pundits urged the administration to make an aggressive effort to explain its actions to the Muslim world. Wisely, the administration obliged. Donald Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice sat for interviews with Al-Jazeera. And most famously, Madison Avenue guru Charlotte Beers was tapped to sharpen up the message to Muslims. The first fruits of Beers's labors appear on the State Department's agitprop site, *www.usinfo.state.gov*, "created strictly for ... key international audiences." Unfortunately, the site does a better job promoting the critics of American policy than American policy itself. On a page called "Muslim Life in America," Beers & Co. approvingly quote Nihad Awad, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), on the importance of mosques as "bases for political and social mobilization"—a mobilization that would sound a good deal better if Awad were not an unabashed Hamas enthusiast. (Describing the first World Trade Center bombing, Awad once claimed, "there is ample evidence indicating that both the Mossad and the Egyptian Intelligence played a role in the explosion.") Beers also links directly to CAIR's homepage, where visitors seeking expressions of Americans' open-mindedness and pluralism will instead find statements such as, "Since the terrorist attacks on our nation in September, American Muslims and groups that represent them, have been the target of an unprecedented smear campaign." They'll see CAIR's charge that the government shutdown of the Holy Land Foundation, a Hamas front group, smacks of "an attack on Islam." And they'll read an article about anti-Muslim bigotry in the United States entitled, "The Freedom to Believe Doesn't Go Far." With p.r. like this, who needs bad press?


YES, MY ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLAN IS COMPLICATED AND NOT EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS HOW IT WORKS.
AND YES IT REWARDS THOSE AT THE TOP AND LEAVES THOSE AT THE BOTTOM TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES.
BUT WHAT WE NEED TO REMEMBER IS THAT IT WORKS.
THAT'S THE ENRON BUSINESS PLAN YOU'RE READING FROM.
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AND THE EXECUTIVES JUST TOLD ME IT WORKED.

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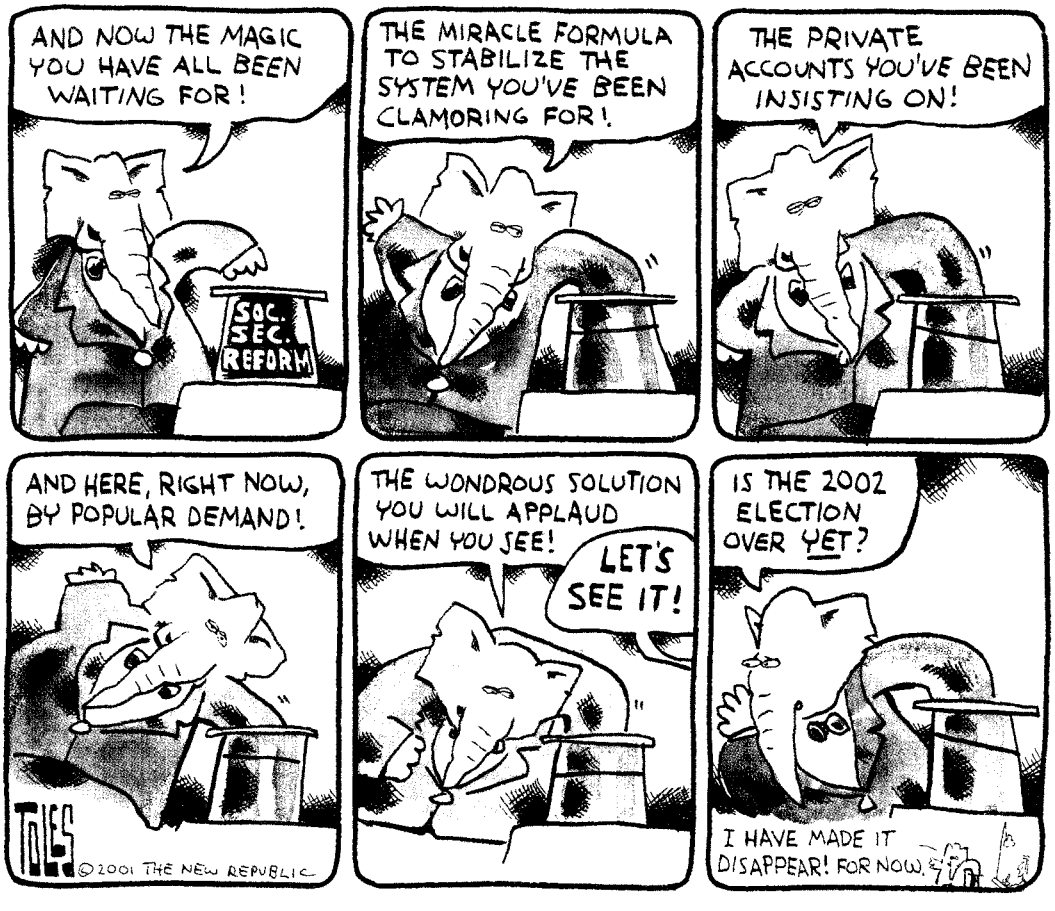
UNPLUG THAT DIALYSIS MACHINE: "It's a little more somber when you're dealing with life and death issues instead of the patients' bill of rights," Karl Rove, explaining the president's newfound seriousness, *The New York Times*, December 9

IDIOCY WATCH, CONT'D: "They started by shaking hands. We said 'Salaam aleikum'—peace be upon you—then the first pebbles flew past my face. A small boy tried to grab my bag. Then another. Then someone punched me in the back. Then young men broke my glasses, began smashing stones into my face and head. I couldn't see for the blood pouring down my forehead and swamping my eyes. And even then, I understood. I couldn't blame them for what they were doing. In fact, if I were the Afghan refugees of Kila Abdullah, close to the Afghan-Pakistan border, I would have done just the same to Robert Fisk. Or any other Westerner I could find.... And—I realised—there were all the Afghan men and boys who had attacked me who should never have done so but whose brutality was entirely the product of others, of us—of we who had armed their struggle against the Russians and ignored their pain and laughed at their civil war and then armed and paid them again for the 'War for Civilisation' just a few miles away and then bombed their homes and ripped up their families and called them 'collateral damage.'... I'll say it again. If I was an Afghan refugee in Kila Abdullah, I would have done just what they did. I would have attacked Robert Fisk. Or any other Westerner I could find."—Robert Fisk (repeat appearance), *The Independent*, December 10

OF THE MAKING OF BOOKS THERE IS NO END: We are delighted to announce the publication of the following recent masterworks of thought and scholarship by TNR contributors, some of which (the masterworks, not the contributors) were born in our pages: *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000* by Stephen Kotkin (Oxford University Press); *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* by Richard Wolin (Princeton University Press); *The Siege of the Arts: Collected Writings, 1994-2001* by Robert Brustein (Ivan R. Dee); and *Screen: Essays on Graphic Design, New Media, and Visual Culture* by Jessica Helfand (Princeton Architectural Press).

MASTHEAD MOVES: We are also delighted to announce the enlistment of John McWhorter into the ranks of our contributing editors. He teaches linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley and is the author of *Word On the Street: Debunking the Myth of a Pure Standard English* and *Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America.* His new book, *The Power of Babel: A Natural History of Language*, has just been published by Times Books. McWhorter's recent essays in our pages on African American culture, written in a hip voice of reason, provoked much discussion, and we are happy to promise more.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STOP THE PRESSES!: "LABOR TO BACK PRO-UNION CANDIDATES"—*The Washington Times*, December 6

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: In last week's Cambridge Diarist, an error was introduced during the editing process. The body responsible for awarding the Nobel Peace Prize is the Norwegian Nobel Committee, not the Swedish Academy. We regret the error. ■

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White House Watch

Power House

By Ryan Lizza

This year's denouement between the White House and Congress is ending with a whimper, not a bang. There are no prospects for the kind of titanic budget showdown that was a staple of the Clinton years. Nor will there be any major, end-of-the-year legislative victories for congressmen to brag about back home during the long holiday recess. Democrats, led by Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, have successfully thwarted most of President Bush's pre-9/11 agenda. For his part, the president has remained at arm's length from the sausage-making on the Hill, occasionally cajoling Congress in speeches and photo ops but rarely engaging members on the details of legislation. At a discussion with reporters Tuesday, Bush senior adviser Karl Rove, answering a question about the president's domestic agenda, noted, "Dealing with Congress is sometimes painful."

The White House is trying to reduce that pain—but not by forcing Daschle to pass Bush's agenda. Rather, its strategy is to fight for enough executive authority so they don't have to deal with him. The endgame this year is all about separation of powers. What the administration has been doing, in ways small and large, is grabbing authority for the executive branch and weakening Congress's ability to inflict pain on Bush. The real legacy of this Congress won't be a stimulus package or education reform. It will be the executive branch's successful aggrandizement of power—at Congress's expense.

This all started, of course, with the powers Congress handed the president to fight the war on terrorism. In the weeks after the attacks, Congress approved a use-of-force resolution that gives Bush wide latitude to attack terrorists worldwide; handed him an emergency-spending bill that allows him to pay out $20 billion with almost no restrictions; and gave him an anti-terrorism bill with unprecedented new law enforcement powers. Bush seized other war-related powers without Congress's input, including military tribunals for the Defense Department, and vast new powers assumed by John Ashcroft's Justice Department. But the administration's expansion of Bush's executive authority is no longer limited to the war. It's the subtext of all the end-of-the-year confrontations between the White House and Congress.

The fight played out in both chambers last week. In the House the issue was fast-track trade authority. By definition the legislation is a surrender of congressional authority to the president. Fast track will prevent Congress from meddling with trade deals submitted by Bush; deals will have to be approved by a straight up or down vote. Earlier this year the House leadership scheduled the measure for a vote, but pulled it when Republicans realized it wouldn't pass. This time the administration made a simple argument, articulated by Speaker of the House Denny Hastert on the day of the vote: "This Congress will either support our president who is fighting a courageous war on terrorism and redefining American world leadership or it will undercut the president at the worst possible time." That appeal was enough for Bush to eke out a one-vote victory.

In the Senate last week Bush won another skirmish that will help put the executive in charge over the near term. Democrats attempted to add $15 billion in homeland security funds to the defense appropriations bill despite a veto threat from Bush. The Democratic plan failed spectacularly as Republicans voted together to block the money. The fight, though, was not about spending: The administration has said repeatedly that more must be spent on homeland defense. The real struggle was over whether Congress or the president would get to decide how much to spend and what to spend it on. A terse statement issued with the administration's veto threat basically informed Congress that the issue was none of its business: "The timing, content, and level of any additional resources beyond the $20 billion requested cannot be ascertained and should not be prejudged until after the Administration has had time to complete [a] comprehensive analysis of need, and share it with Congress." The White House accused Democrats of "preempting the role of the Homeland Security Director." This is not the first time Bush has sent a message to Congress about what he thinks the legislative branch's role on homeland security should be. Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge's new office is designed in a way that immunizes him from having to testify before Congress. When members sought to change this, they were rebuffed by the White House.

Bush is trying to escape the vise grip Congress holds over parts of his domestic agenda, too. In a little-noticed move, the White House recently agreed to drop the most controversial feature of Bush's faith-based legislation, the so-called charitable choice proposal that would channel federal money to religious organizations. That left the bill in Congress consisting chiefly of popular tax incentives for charitable giving. But as the charitable choice provision was dropped to help glide the bill to passage, the administration quietly took steps to implement it by means of federal regulation. The strategy was hinted at in the fine print of the administration's August report on faith-based charities, which blamed "not Congress" but "overly restrictive Agency rules" that "improperly limit the participation of faith-based organizations." Now, according to OMB Watch, a watchdog group that monitors those mind-numbing little entries in the Federal Register, a new $10 million Justice Department program to combat juvenile delinquency would be allowed to give grants directly to houses of worship.

Even the stimulus debate is a proxy for this battle. For the White House, the stimulus package is basically a vehicle to accelerate the income tax rate reductions that were passed earlier this year. The rate reductions are the sine qua non of the package for Bush (and the reason the stimulus negotiations are deadlocked as The New Republic goes to press). Democrats don't want them accelerated now because they hope, eventually, to cancel the cuts altogether to make room for their domestic priorities. Bush wants the cuts locked in today so tomorrow it will be easier to crowd out Democratic

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American Ingenuity: A Key to Future Security

John Raisian
is director
and senior fellow
at the
Hoover Institution.

In a crisis, such as the terrorist attacks on September 11, it is natural to look to our government leaders to set the course. But **we'd be making a terrible mistake if we relied too heavily on top-down political solutions, ignoring our real strength, the decentralized ingenuity of the American people.**

Consider just one example. In the weeks after the attacks, we wrestled with ways of improving airport security. In Congress, two fundamentally different possibilities emerged. Either we could federalize airport security, making it the job of the government, or we could permit airport security to remain in the private sector, using the government to mandate higher standards, to delegate the responsibility for meeting such standards to private security firms, and to monitor the performance of private sector solutions. Which methodology should we rely on for safety in the air? One similar to the United States Postal Service, a model that has regularly been criticized for costly and inefficient service that too often proves unreliable? Or the competitive alternative that led creative individuals to introduce FedEx and UPS?

In the end, Congress chose the former. I realize that we are in a crisis and that the American public looks to government's leadership to assure our well-being, but I am dismayed that we continue to settle for inferior solutions because they are seen as politically superior. Why should we settle for less? The challenge for our government is to stop ducking its responsibility, instead dedicating itself to finding the best solution to the problem of airport security—uncompromised safety at the lowest cost possible—and to other problems like it that are sure to arise. Overwhelmingly, the best solutions will be competitive solutions.

Economists around the world generally understand and applaud the workings of competition and private markets. It is difficult to make the case for centralized decision making of the kind present within socialism, certainly for the kind of command economies that once dominated the Eastern bloc. We should be suspicious of government solutions that entail government agencies and institutions directly managing an enterprise. We need to expand the ingenuity of the American citizenry at large, encouraging the development of solutions in the marketplace. Is this not the order of the day?

It is natural for us to turn to our government leaders in a time of crisis. But it is not a foregone conclusion that our citizenry expects the government to centralize more of the workings of our society. Over the longer term, we must look to the ingenuity of our people to address the many elements of this crisis. **The leadership we need should create institutions structured to help us accomplish our aims, not have us sit back and expect government "engineers" to solve our problems.** Decentralized activity can respond to shortcomings with a speed and entrepreneurial energy that government can seldom match. Such approaches will have a great deal to contribute to our nation in the days ahead.

— John Raisian

Paid for by the Hoover institution, Stanford University.

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spending with his military and homeland defense priorities. In other words, as in the debate over homeland security funds, the rate-reduction fight is about whether Congress or the White House will have the upper hand in the budget battles ahead.

And that's what this year's separation-of-powers skirmishes are all about: controlling next year's agenda. While Democrats may cheer their shrewdly obstructionist Senate leader today, next month they will see how dramatically power has shifted away from Congress when Bush delivers his State of the Union address. Not only will he be able to bask in the glow of victory in Afghanistan, but the White House will have spent the month of January, when Congress isn't in Washington, rolling out an election-year domestic agenda to complement the war. Karl Rove smiled this week when he told reporters how keenly aware Bush is that political capital is "perishable." The last few months were all about hoarding presidential power. Next month Bush will start using it. ■

Hamburg Dispatch

Cell Block

By RICHARD MINITER

HAMBURG IS THE Rhode Island of Germany: a small, prosperous state renowned as a bastion of multicultural tolerance and a stronghold of the left. The center-left Social Democrats comfortably dominated its politics for close to 50 years. You are more likely to find a gay-pride march here than a skinhead rally.

But less than two weeks after September 11, this liberal haven elected a man to the state parliament—which then awarded him the state's highest law enforcement post—who is known to his friends and enemies as "Judge Merciless." His real name is Ronald Schill, a municipal judge who earned his moniker by handing down the harshest possible sentences for minor crimes: One graffiti sprayer, for instance, received a long term in a high-security prison. But Schill is not just your typical law-and-order conservative. He's an extremist who pledges to send "back to Africa" any Africans who cannot produce identity cards. He says that "foreigners" are clogging local jails and that the "same ethnic groups" always commit crimes. He has promised to deport foreigners who commit crimes. He has even floated a plan to chemically castrate sex offenders.

For decades German politics have been driven by guilt, which precluded anything resembling war-era rhetoric. So how did a man of the radical right rise to power in the country's most liberal state? By taking advantage of the war on terrorism—and its attendant fear and xenophobia—which may be triggering a long-feared, and long-repressed, realignment of German politics.

"Judge Merciless" and his Party of the Law and Order Offensive's get-tough-on-crime message is perfectly tailored to the politics of post-September 11 Germany. Before the attacks, pollsters predicted that Schill and his new party would claim 14 percent of the vote, enough to give them a few seats but only a minor role in the parliament. After the attacks, Schill's support climbed to nearly 20 percent. The additional support was "in view of what happened in the U.S.," Melanie Schneider of Emnid, a polling firm, told reporters. A German parliamentary coalition of three parties propelled Schill into power.

It helped that in the follow-up to 9/11, investigators traced Mohammed Atta, two other suicide pilots, and three Al Qaeda accomplices to Hamburg. In his campaign, Schill reminded voters that the city is a "nest of terrorists." He prodded: "Why did terrorists choose to live in our city, why did they think it was the ideal place to plan their terrorist attacks?" He blamed lax law enforcement and the "generation of 1968," which lacked the will to fight political extremists.

Schill had a point. Hamburg is home not only to terrorist cells, but to a strong anti-capitalist, anti-American anarchist movement, which periodically attacks the Hamburg police in bloody street battles. The anarchists claim several neighborhoods as "law-free zones," which police generally avoid to prevent riots. What better base for terrorists, Schill pointed out, than a state filled with anarchists and nonconfrontational, indulgent police?

Schill's message, however, wasn't just anti-criminal and anti-terrorist. It was anti-foreigner, too. Critics call Schill the "Jörg Haider of Hamburg," and there are similarities. Like Haider, Schill is telegenic, enjoys something of a personality cult (his party was listed on the ballot as simply "Schill"), and gleefully steps on politically correct sensibilities. But he's savvier than his Austrian counterpart. He doesn't visit Nazi veterans or praise Hitler's economic policies, as Haider did. He turns up in a suit, not an ersatz uniform like some neo-Nazis. He reminds his listeners that he's a judge—a sober professional. "One shouldn't confuse being righteous with being on the right," he tells reporters robotically. Instead, he says he wants to make Hamburg "as safe as Stuttgart or Munich." But then he trots out bogus statistics: 70 percent of drug dealers are "foreigners." "Everyone knows Hamburg is easy on crime," he said at an election night event. "The word has spread all the way to Africa." And while Schill is not openly anti-Semitic, he doesn't display the usual German sensitivity to Jewish issues either. Earlier this year Holocaust survivors and Jewish leaders had cut a deal with the Hamburg government to shut down a prison and open a memorial museum on the site of a former concentration camp. When Schill was elected, he overturned it.

But the usual political niceties don't win elections in Hamburg anymore. Before September 11 Schill's campaign stops were packed with middle-aged, lower-middle-class people frightened and angry that Hamburg's murder rate is ten times that of Stuttgart or Munich. They knew that the city's main train station is a mall for dope peddlers. Then they woke up one September morning to find that they were sharing their

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city with terrorists. Before the attacks they wanted Rudy Giuliani; now they want Pat Buchanan. Schill's party captured nearly one out of five votes—far more than any other far-right party in any German election in the postwar era.

And the momentum hasn't let up. Schill plans to expand his party into the states of eastern Germany, where crime and unemployment is high, and the strict law enforcement of the Soviet era is remembered fondly by some. And the post-September 11 discovery of terrorist cells scattered throughout Germany will only help his cause. "Our success is causing a dynamic we can barely resist," he told London's *Daily Telegraph*. "That makes a national engagement likely" in next year's national elections. Across Germany, one in four people now say they would vote for Schill's policies, according to a late October poll. Before the attacks his party was barely on the national radar screen.

And don't bet that as the shock of the attacks wears off, support for Schill and other far-right politicians will wane. September 11 energized an anti-foreigner electoral strategy that has been emerging for several years. Last year the Christian Democrats (CDU)—a long-established center-right party, which joined Schill's coalition in Hamburg—began testing a campaign theme of German "national identity." The party fought Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's immigration reforms, which would have increased immigration levels and overturned the long-standing requirement that German citizens have "German blood." While CDU lost on immigration reform, its popularity rose. The party scored a surprising electoral win in the relatively prosperous, centrist-conservative state of Hesse. Roland Koch, prime minister of Hesse and a rising star in the CDU, predicted that the issue of "national identity"—i.e., opposition to foreigners—would be second only to the economy in national elections next year. And in Germany's most populous state, North Rhine Westphalia, Juergen Ruettgers, deputy chairman of the CDU, campaigned on the slogan "*Kinder statt Inder*" (Children instead of Indians).

SEPTEMBER 11 HAS moved the fulcrum of German politics from guilt to fear. For decades the politics of guilt had been manifest in the strength of the German pacifist movement. It showed in the massive financial contributions to the EU—a form of self-imposed war reparations. And it played into the German government's unwillingness to take a tough stand against terrorism within its own borders. After a bomb in a Berlin disco killed two American soldiers and wounded some 200 Germans in 1986, Chancellor Helmut Kohl vowed tough action. But a conviction took 15 years, and it later came out that the Kohl government had stalled so as not to anger the Libyans. In another case, in 1998, Italian police detained Kurdish terrorist Abdullah Ocalan by executing a German arrest warrant. But Schroeder's government refused to request his extradition to Germany.

The attacks on the United States ended this leftist timidity overnight. German newspapers reported that much of the terrorist plot was hatched on German soil, and police arrested Al Qaeda operatives throughout the Federal Republic. Chancellor Schroeder announced his "unlimited solidarity" with the United States. He even pledged to send German soldiers to Afghanistan. This provoked a fierce battle within his coalition. His partners, the Greens, opposed sending any element of the German army. Schroeder upped the stakes, combining a vote to send troops with a vote of confidence. If the Greens voted as a bloc against troops, they would be dissolving the German government—and kicking themselves out of power. The government survived by two votes. How could Schroeder make such a daring move? Because he was confident that the mood of his country had changed. It wasn't simply that polls favored military action against terrorists; he sensed that Germans were undergoing a lasting change of heart.

Some of that change of heart is reasonable, even laudatory. But it is also what makes "Judge Merciless" possible. Schill, in fact, embodies exactly the qualities that postwar German politics tried so hard to get away from. He is authoritarian, draconian, and militaristic. He champions the death penalty. Most of all, he targets foreigners. Before September 11, his rise to power would have been unthinkable. Now, dealing with him is unavoidable. ■

Kandahar Dispatch

Going South

By ELIZABETH RUBIN

AN ELEPHANT IN heat. That's the only way to describe the scene Tuesday as the new governor of Kandahar, Gul Agha Shirzai, asserted his newly won authority. Inside the high-ceilinged halls of the governor's mansion, three workers on ladders were quietly wiping away the whitewash that had been applied by the Taliban in their frenzy to eradicate "living images." Two frescoes slowly emerged, revealing the heads of two of Afghanistan's founders: Mir Wais Hotaki, a Pashtun of the Ghilzai tribe who led a revolt against Persian domination in the eighteenth century and paved the way for the founding of modern Afghanistan; and Ahmad Shah, a Pashtun of the Durrani tribe and a commander of an Afghan contingent of the Persian army at Kandahar who was elected king of Afghanistan in 1747 by the Pashtun tribes and went on to conquer an empire from Eastern Persia through Northern India. Beneath these two historic figures, dozens of black-and-green turbaned soldiers were milling amongst tribal leaders from all over the province who had converged at the mansion the night before to find out what new kind of rulership they had inherited.

During the previous reign of Gul Agha, a local mujahedin commander who ruled Kandahar in the early 1990s, Kandahar province was a gangland hell. The citizens of Kandahar

ELIZABETH RUBIN is covering the war in Afghanistan for THE NEW REPUBLIC.

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city lived under constant threat of rape, extortion, robbery, and death. Every bit of road in the province was divvied up among opposing factions who levied taxes from truck drivers and hapless passengers. In one notorious incident, dozens of people were killed in the bazaar when a tank battle broke out between two commanders dueling over a beautiful young boy whom one of the commanders had bought as his lover and then "married" in a secret ceremony officiated over by tribal elders.

But at a press conference in front of the tribal leaders, Gul Agha—who had assumed control of the city with the blessing of interim Afghan head Hamid Karzai, but only after he had already taken the city by force—declared that this time around he was 100 percent sure things would be different. "First, the commanders all had a terrible experience from that time. And second, we had no central, united government in Afghanistan. Everyone was against each other," he said. "Now, we have unity and they will all take orders from me." Promising that he would disarm any illegitimate groups in the city, he said, "There can be no law and order with so many guns and this town should be governed by law not guns."

Evidently, Gul Agha hadn't quite put his plans—for control of his own men, or even himself—into place by Tuesday morning, when an unexpected convoy of pickups and heavy trucks pulled up at the gates of the mansion, loaded with American Special Forces in desert camouflage, black sunglasses, and machine guns. No one knew why they were there, and apparently the guards were not quick enough to welcome them. At least that was the only evident explanation for what happened next. Suddenly Gul Agha—a huge man with thick features, missing teeth, dressed in a gray *shalwar kameez* and charcoal wool vest—barreled his way across the garden, slapping and beating soldiers, onlookers, anyone in his path, smashing his fists against the windows of taxis and pickups parked around the gardens. The American Special Forces circled the gardens as Gul Agha unleashed his unfocused anger left and right, bloodying a couple of his own men. Oddly no one seemed to take his rage, which lasted about 15 minutes, very seriously, least of all the Americans. After hanging around for a few minutes, one of them—maybe in earnest, maybe not—muttered something about having come to the wrong place, and they reversed positions and rolled out through the gates back into the city streets.

Out in the streets, Gul Agha's soldiers were brandishing sticks to beat back the crowd that had gathered to watch the spectacle of American Special Forces speeding through town. For the average citizen, who has lived under American bombardment for the past two months, it was an unwanted spectacle. "Americans are not welcome here," I heard all day. Others went further, to say, "If the Americans don't leave soon, the civilians of Kandahar will rise up against them."

And while most Afghans will tell you how much they resented the presence and arrogance of the Arabs residing in the country, some villagers have gone out of their way to bury the bodies of Arabs killed in the recent fighting around the airport and by American bombs. "They're our brothers," said one man standing in front of freshly dug, empty graves at the cemetery in his village. He was still waiting for permission from Gul Agha to go back to the airport and retrieve the rest of the dead Arabs. "They built mosques and Islamic schools and have helped us so much."

The dominant mood in this southeastern desert town, named for Alexander the Great after he rebuilt it (Iskander was the Eastern name for Alexander), is ambivalence. In Kabul and elsewhere, the flag that waves is the green, black, and white mujahedin flag. But Kandahar was the capital of Afghanistan under Ahmed Shah Durrani, the country's first king, and here—even as Gul Agha is cooperating with the Karzai's new regime in Kabul—the flag flapping on pickup trucks, taxis, military outposts, and homes is the old red, black, and green Afghan national flag that flew under King Zahir Shah. It's a sign of how far Kandahar is from Kabul, and also how much the people here pine for a symbol of stability and control.

On the outskirts of the city at a beaten-up mud house that serves as a military base, a veteran mujahedin fighter said he had no doubt the Taliban would recapture Kandahar in two hours if the Americans left their desert base because, he said, "we have no unity among ourselves." He had just reinhabited his old base from the pre-Taliban era and belonged to the forces of Karzai, the English-speaking Pashtun leader who was selected in Bonn to head up the interim Afghan government. "Our soldiers don't even want to go to the bazaar because they're afraid of Gul Agha's soldiers."

Nor is it clear that the Taliban are gone. Some soldiers say they believe there are Arabs hiding out with sympathetic civilians in houses near the airport. Until two days ago, menacing posters left by the retreating Taliban could be seen inside the governor's compounds, in the bazaars, and on the streets. The posters warned that anyone aiding Karzai's forces or the Americans would be killed—not today, not tomorrow, but in a month or two. Taliban forces are still holed up some 30 kilometers south of the city. And while everyone seems to be enjoying their freedom from Taliban strictures—posters of women in bikinis are already up in the newly opened music shops, women are riding in trucks and walking the streets without burqas, canaries are singing in their cages in the crowded bazaars—people speak openly of their nostalgia for the security the Taliban brought.

THE CITY'S AMBIVALENCE, however, is not only a reflection of insecurity and the crudeness of Gul Agha's mujahedin, but of an illusion well orchestrated by the man whose whereabouts are still unknown and whose name still shadows Kandahar: Mullah Omar.

As we drove out to the Mullah's compound, Zmery, our taxi driver, reminisced about Omar's beneficence and how his home was so simple, so poor, just like everyone else's. Which was true—his *old* house in the middle of town was simple and poor. Zmery was in shock, however, when we pulled into the Mullah's compound, open to the public for the first time since it was designed a few years ago. It's a model of Mullah kitsch. Set behind a newly planted pine grove, in the shadows of Filkuh (Elephant) Mountain, were multicolored domed pillars surrounding the residence where his four wives lived; a blue and green mosque; blue fountains; and garden walls painted with garish pastoral landscapes also in blue and

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green. Inside, chandeliers from Japan still hung. Mohammad Sharif, who had headed up the construction team, was still in awe of the roof he was ordered to erect to withstand a cruise missile attack—one layer of timber, a double layer of truck tires, 40 centimeters of cement topped by a meter of mud, and then another 40 centimeters of cement.

What Mohammad Sharif remembered most about Mullah Omar were his cows. He spent hours watering the grass for his cows. He fed his cows and even enjoyed shoveling the cow shit. "He dressed like a nomad and ate like a nomad and he acted like a wild lion. He had such a cruel face. And he sat on his heels popping *naswar*"—a commonly chewed mixture of tobacco, ash, and lime—"into his mouth and spitting into a pot." This was the simple life that endeared Mullah Omar to many of his followers. But when Zmery waded through the bombed-out remains of Mullah's lavishly adorned palace, years of illusion were dispelled. "An hour ago I liked that man so much," he said. In fact, until that moment he'd been ruing the Taliban and the Mullah's disappearance, mostly out of fear of Gul Agha's forces. "I thought he was such a poor person. We were never even allowed to drive on this road so we had no idea he lived here," Zmery said. "Now I will tell my family, my relatives, my neighbors how he was living." Samiullah, a former Taliban intelligence officer who was also taking the opportunity to visit the Mullah's abode, was even more aghast by what he saw: "Everyone in Kandahar is so poor all these years and that motherfucker Omar destroyed our country and brought all these American bombs so he could live like this."

For people in Kandahar, one promise of stability after another has evaporated, leaving only, again, chaos. On the way back to town both Zmery and Samiullah agreed that the only hope for Kandahar and Afghanistan—however symbolic and ethereal—was the return of King Zahir Shah. ■

How the Saudis lobby Bush.

Arabian Fights

By Lawrence F. Kaplan

Asked in a recent *Washington Post* interview whether the United States had been pressuring Israel at the behest of Saudi Arabia, Secretary of State Colin Powell responded, "we are not doing this because we have an obligation to pay off one side or another." Powell got it half-right. We have no obligation to the Saudis. But we've been paying them off nonetheless. And, until the terror bombings in Jerusalem and Haifa two weeks ago, it looked like Israel would be the one to foot the bill.

According to popular wisdom, Riyadh's leverage over the Bush administration's Israel policy derives from the events of September 11—the price Washington pays for maintaining its vaunted "coalition." But, in truth, the Saudis have been lobbying the Bush administration to turn its back on the Jewish state since its first day in office. The very next day, in fact, King Fahd's cabinet issued a statement urging the new president "to press the Israeli side to implement international resolutions, stop procrastinating, lift the blockade, and put a halt to the bloodshed." And they had reason to believe he would. Having converted their Gulf war contacts into business contacts, the men who guided foreign policy in Bush I (and who, it was assumed, would help do the same in Bush II) boast unusually close relations with the Saudis. The elder Bush, for example, decamped for the Carlyle Group, a Washington investment firm favored by Saudi elites—including the bin Laden family, with whom Bush Sr. has met twice.

During his first months in office, however, W. defied expectations. Far from pressing the Israelis, the president enshrined in official policy his campaign pledge of unconditional support for Israel—a stance not particularly well received by Saudi Arabia's potentates. As a result, Crown Prince Abdullah still has yet to accept a standing invitation from Bush to visit Washington. The president, then, has found himself in a bind: A staunch supporter of the Jewish state, his administration has nonetheless gone to excruciating lengths not to offend a regime that would prefer that state never existed. In April, for instance, when Israeli soldiers fired on a convoy of Palestinian officials, Yasir Arafat called Abdullah, who called Prince Bandar, the monarchy's man in Washington and Colin Powell's former squash partner. Bander, in turn, phoned Dick Cheney. And, within an hour, Powell was upbraiding Ariel Sharon on the phone. (The Egyptians complain about Israel just as loudly as the Saudis, but they're relegated to official channels.) Then, in response to further Saudi complaints, Bush dispatched Powell on a peacemaking mission to Israel in June.

Still, Riyadh wasn't happy. In fact, that very same month, Saudi anger boiled over. In a June meeting that set the stage for special envoy Anthony Zinni's current stay in the region, Powell met with Abdullah in Paris, where, according to a senior administration official, "[Powell] got the full treatment—'appoint an envoy, recognize [Palestinian] statehood, speak out, do this, do that.'" At about the same time, U.S. ambassadors throughout the Arab world began warning Foggy Bottom that the Saudis meant business: Washington must either step up its mediation, they cautioned, or risk a breach with Riyadh. Poppy's national security adviser Brent Scowcroft—a vocal champion of the Saudis who has since been installed as a director of Pennzoil and Qualcomm, firms heavily invested in Riyadh—chimed in, warning that America's Arab friends were "deeply disappointed with this administration and its failure to do something to moderate the attitude of Israel." Two weeks later, Scowcroft, Bush père, and the president himself repaired to Kennebunkport. There the former president did something unprecedented. With the current president apparently in the room, George Sr. picked up the phone, called Abdullah, and assured him that Bush Jr.'s "heart is in the right place" and that he could be counted on "to do the right thing."

But the Saudis still weren't convinced. During July and August, Abdullah sent Bush several letters, each more shrill than the last, beseeching the president to "pull the reins on

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Mr. Sharon," as an Abdullah spokesman describes the correspondence. According to a White House adviser, one of these letters threatened a return to the "summer of 1973," a reference to the Arab front that united against Israel prior to the Yom Kippur War. Another, reported *The Wall Street Journal*, warned, "We are at a crossroads. It is time for the United States and Saudi Arabia to look at their separate interests. Those governments that don't feel the pulse of the people and respond to it will suffer the fate of the Shah of Iran." It was this threat, received in late August, that finally prompted the administration to reverse course and, in the first week of September, to convene a principals meeting at which Saudi discontent was explicitly tied to the launching of a peace initiative. Powell and CIA Director George Tenet urged the president to meet with Arafat at the United Nations and recommended that Powell deliver an address endorsing a Palestinian state—an address that was even then being drafted by State Department peace processor Aaron Miller. The administration would then follow up with the dispatch of a special envoy to Israel. Bush agreed with the idea and, for good measure, sent the Saudis a letter, which, according to Foreign Minister Prince Saud Faisal, indicated "that the United States had come to a full realization that it was time for a new effort."

Then came September 11. Given that 15 of the hijackers were Saudi, one might have expected the monarchy to be somewhat chastened. Far from it. "After September 11," a senior administration official explains, "[the Saudis] just wanted to change the topic from themselves. So they turned the volume up even louder." Yet, fearful of appearing to reward terrorism, the White House postponed Powell's speech. Even so, Bush publicly declared his support for a Palestinian state and declared that "the world ought to applaud" Arafat "for trying to control radical elements." Until November the administration also resisted placing Hamas on its list of newly sanctioned terrorist groups. And the State Department, echoing the Saudi contention that such groups were merely "resisting occupation," said it now distinguished between terrorism based on "political issues" (violence directed against Israelis) and terrorism that seeks to "destroy societies" (violence directed against Americans).

None of this, however, seemed to make the slightest impression on the Saudis. Indeed, in a November 9 interview with *The New York Times*, Foreign Minister Saud Faisal complained that he was "angrily frustrated" with the younger Bush, whose stance on the peace process "would make a sane man go mad." A week later, under pressure from the Saudis as well as Powell, Bush agreed to revive the initiative. It was decided that Powell would give his speech on November 19 at the University of Kentucky. But exactly what he planned to say remained the object of bitter disagreement, with Pentagon officials—including Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld—and the White House political staff questioning the wisdom of a renewed Middle East initiative. Bush himself tempered some of Powell's language and Israeli officials even offered suggestions. Nonetheless, Powell did deliver the speech, which demanded that "the occupation must end." He also announced the appointment of General Anthony Zinni

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as his special envoy to the region, a choice Israeli officials suspect was made with the Saudis in mind. (Zinni, the former chief of American forces in the Middle East—excluding Israel—maintains exceptionally close ties to the Saudi royal family, who call the general "our commander" and go falcon hunting with him.) And Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs William Burns assured the Saudis that Zinni would remain in the region until "progress" was made.

Arafat, for one, was pleased, thanking King Fahd in Riyadh one week later for playing "an active role in moving the U.S. position toward a Palestinian state." And Saudi Prince Alawaleed exulted that "Washington is doing exactly what we asked for." But his fellow princes weren't so sure. "The fact that Powell asks Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to make an effort to stop the violence in Palestine is disappointing and impossible to satisfy," *Okaz*, an official Saudi newspaper, commented the day after the speech. "[The Saudis] thought the speech was soft," an administration official said a few days later, "and they're still calling."

BUT NO AMOUNT of Saudi griping could overcome what happened next. The Palestinians welcomed Zinni to the region with a parade of suicide bombers, who, in the space of one day, killed 25 Israelis. As a result, the former general's mission effectively ended before it began, wasting the political capital the Bush administration had expended at Saudi behest. And since the attacks, members of the White House national security team claim Bush has lost whatever little trust he once possessed in Arafat. National security adviser Condoleezza Rice and her deputy, Stephen Hadley, have also turned squarely against the Palestinian leader. At a meeting in the aftermath of the attacks, they asked how the United States would know if Arafat was upholding his pledge to clamp down on terrorism. The answer came back: when that clampdown prompts internecine violence on the Palestinian street, a standard that has since become an unofficial barometer for measuring Arafat's sincerity. Even Powell and Burns were said to be livid at the Palestinian leader. In his meeting with Sharon the day after the attacks, Bush, according to Israeli officials, said Israel could take whatever action it deemed necessary, short of ousting Arafat and dismantling the Palestinian Authority. As for the Saudis, a senior administration official claims Bush "was already chafing at the complaints, and ... he won't be inclined to take their advice again any time soon."

But how soon is "any time soon"? This week the Saudi foreign minister met with Bush again, ostensibly to be reminded what steps his country must take to crack down on terror. Instead he ended up reminding the president what steps must be taken to crack down on *Israel*. Nor have administration officials tempered their public—and phony—exultations about "across the board" Saudi cooperation in the war against terror. National Security Council Senior Director for Near East Affairs Bruce Reidel, who has revealed himself to be a much closer friend to the Saudis than to the Israelis, will be stepping down later this month. Yet administration officials say the candidates most likely to replace him—Ambassador to Yemen Barbara Bodine and former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense Alina Romanowski—may prove even less supportive of the Jewish state. The Israelis also worry that, as soon as the violence abates or Arafat takes cosmetic steps to restrain Palestinian terrorists, the administration will heed Saudi counsel once more. Of course, the president could always follow his own instincts instead. They've certainly proved far superior to his father's, not to mention the rogues whispering in his ear. ■

Why no one really knows how consumers feel.

Confidence Game

By ROB WALKER

LATE LAST MONTH the nation's newspapers offered yet another in what has seemed a relentless series of bad economic tidings: The Consumer Confidence Index had fallen yet again, from 85.3 to 82.2, its lowest level since 1994. This was bad news indeed—bad enough to make the Dow Jones drop 110 points. Indeed, in the twitchy post-September 11 economy, consumer confidence has become the It Statistic. With business investment shrinking and the markets on the fritz, free-spending shoppers are considered the last line of defense against a disastrous economic slide. An ongoing crumbling of consumer confidence—despite White House exhortations to get out there and spend for the sake of the commonweal—spelled real trouble.

Or did it? After all, just a few days earlier, a different gauge, the Index of Consumer Sentiment, had *risen*, suggesting a rebound in consumer confidence. Actual retail sales, moreover, had spiked in October—up 7.1 percent over the previous month after having fallen 2.2 percent in September. Finally, this news of deepening consumer doubt came right after we'd all seen the footage on the evening news of American shoppers lining up at 3 a.m. for the annual after-Thanksgiving sprint through department stores to buy up discounted television sets and so on. Admittedly, those early-morning shoppers were just snapping up bargains, and the October retail sales jump could be explained largely by cheap auto-financing deals. But that shouldn't matter if all you're trying to measure are what John Maynard Keynes called "animal spirits." And however you explain it, American consumers were looking a good deal more spirited than they had in September.

All of which means that when you hear a concept as vague as "consumer confidence" attached to a number as specific as 82.2, it's a good idea to start asking questions.

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THE CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX (CCI) is compiled by an arm of a nonprofit business-research organization (annual budget: about $50 million) with the pleasingly vague but officious-sounding name The Conference Board. A marketing-firm subcontractor, NFO Worldwide, conducts the underlying survey by mail. Although it's routinely described as a survey of 5,000 households, only about 3,500 generally return the form. The form essentially asks for a positive, negative, or neutral response to five questions about current and future business conditions.

So it's a poll.

Polls have their place, of course, but simply reporting that "x" percent of Americans surveyed feel "positive" about business conditions doesn't really seem like the kind of news that should be dominating business coverage and roiling the stock market. After all, polls from Harris and Gallup also address basic consumer confidence issues, and they never make the same splash that the confidence indexes do. Which goes to show that when you're trying to numberize a slippery idea like sentiment, an "index" trumps a "poll" every time.

How does the Conference Board convert its poll into an index? By combining the responses to its five questions and converting the resulting figure into a composite number "relative" to a benchmark score of 100.0 for 1985. (Why does 1985 equal 100 on this scale? Because it was "a basic, non-eventful year," explains Lynn Franco, director of the Conference Board's Consumer Research Center, offering some insight into the formal science of consumer confidence.) The upshot is a number that can be easily compared over time, and seems conclusive. In August consumer confidence was flying high at 114.3; following the terrorist attacks and three months of bad economic news, it had dropped to 82.2, a decline of 28 percent. See how scientific that was?

The Conference Board's chief rival in this confidence game is the University of Michigan's Index of Consumer Sentiment. In this case, 500 households are surveyed by phone, and the questionnaire is longer and more detailed. Nevertheless, the answers here are also boiled down to five categories and finessed into an index similar to the Conference Board's. (Michigan's "base" year is 1966.) Most of the time the two indexes more or less move in sync, but the Michigan survey, after dipping to 81.8 in September, rose slightly in October and November, and then again this month, to stand at 85.8.

Why do the two indexes show the confidence trend moving in opposite directions? It depends whom you ask. The Conference Board's Franco—after noting that the Michigan survey draws on a smaller sample—suggests the difference might be that two of her survey's five questions deal with employment, compared with only one of Michigan's. (This means, by the way, that when CNBC anchor Tyler Mathison exclaims, "Confidence is all about jobs," in the course of interviewing someone from the Conference Board, as he did recently, what he's articulating is not a fundamental truth the CCI has revealed about the economy, but rather a fundamental truth about the CCI's methodology.) Meanwhile, Michigan survey director Richard Curtin—after noting that the Conference board's less-nuanced survey is outsourced and conducted by mail—suggests the difference might also stem from the fact that Michigan's future-looking questions have a one-year, not a six-month, time horizon, and that its inquiries about assumed spending-power take inflation, or the apparent lack of it, into account.

Both the University of Michigan and the Conference Board claim their surveys have predictive value—which is why they get so much attention. But which is the more accurate predictor? In 1998 the New York Fed compared the two surveys and generally found the CCI to be more predictive of future consumption growth. (Not surprisingly, Franco pointed me to this study.) But here's where things get interesting. Because the Fed's survey also indicated that the CCI is *less* predictive than some of the component numbers that make it up. That is to say, the arithmetic rigmarole that goes into producing the complicated, "scientific" index numbers arguably makes them less accurate.

ALTHOUGH IT DOESN'T get much attention, both the Conference Board and the Michigan indexes are each made up of two sub-indexes, one concerning present conditions and one concerning future conditions. In the case of the Conference Board's survey, respondents are asked to give a positive, negative, or neutral "appraisal of current business conditions" and "appraisal of current employment conditions." Answers to those two questions are numberized, benchmarked to 1985, and reported as the Present Situation Index. Three more questions ask respondents for a positive, negative, or neutral take on "expectations regarding business conditions," "expectations regarding employment conditions," and "expectations regarding their total family income." Those answers become the numerical Expectations Index. The two sub-indexes are combined to create the overall Consumer Confidence Index. (The Michigan survey does more or less the same thing, making one sub-index from its two present-focused categories, and another from its three future-focused ones, and combining the two to come up with its overall figure.)

A good example of how the sub-indexes get glossed over (despite being more predictive in at least some cases) came in the Conference Board's November report. It found that although the all-important CCI number was down, the Expectations Index had actually risen. This latter finding seems to make more sense, given the evidence—and it would jibe with the findings of the Michigan index. But it was largely ignored at the time. (Though it's worth noting that now the Conference Board can claim its findings are vindicated regardless of whether things get better or worse.)

So why do the overall indexes get all the attention? Presumably because they cover more territory, encompassing the way consumers feel about today *and* tomorrow—never mind that the additional vagueness may make them less useful. Michigan, which has been running its survey since late 1946 (20 years before the CCI was launched), actually didn't begin pouring its data into a single, clean index number until 1952. Curtin explains that "the media didn't want to hear" some complex set of survey answers that were subject to interpretation; "they wanted to know, 'Is [consumer

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confidence] better or worse?'" Curtin himself refers to the resulting index as "a communication device."

Indeed, if you look closely at the surveys that make up the two indexes, you discover not only that the parts are more interesting than the sum, but that other data—which doesn't even go into the final index numbers—are the most interesting of all. When Michigan's monthly number is announced, the release also highlights assorted nuggets culled from the phone survey—for example, consumers expect inflation over the next year to be its lowest since the 1950s and anticipate an unemployment rate of 6.5 percent—which are largely ignored in the press. Similarly, in addition to its vague multiple-choice questions, the Conference Board's mail survey also makes several specific queries about recipients' spending plans—whether they intend to buy a car (new or used), a house, or various appliances (TV set, refrigerator, etc.). Despite being more specific and, presumably, more predictive than responses to the general questions—after all, any given respondent probably has a better idea of whether she's going to buy a car in the next six months than she does of overall employment trends—none of this information winds up in the overall indexes.

Of course, none of this means that consumer confidence, as a concept, doesn't matter, or that it's not worth trying to gauge. But the importance the indexes have taken on lately is almost farcical. (Apparently stocks sold off after the most recent Conference Board announcement partly because economists "expected" the index to come in at 86.5; the idea that there are economists actually trying to *predict* what this figure will be is too dismal to dwell on.) The attraction of the all-in-one composite index numbers is not just that they seem to take everything into account, but that they're expressed so decisively—they sound like facts, like the sorts of figures that deserve a place next to weekly jobless claims, monthly nonfarm payroll reports, or quarterly GDP. But of all the information that Michigan and the Conference Board gather, that official-seeming number is probably the least interesting. Too bad it gets all the attention. ■

The next big health care crisis is now.

Health Scare

By JONATHAN COHN

THE LAST TIME anyone in American politics spoke seriously of a health care "crisis" was during the recession of the early 1990s. At the time, unemployment was rising just as high medical costs were driving insurance premiums to unprecedented levels. As a result, millions of people lost their coverage and millions more worried they might be next.

Newspapers captured the situation: "HARD TIMES LEAVE MORE UNINSURED" (*The Hartford Courant*); "POSSIBILITY OF LOSING COVERAGE WORRIES CAREGIVERS, PARENTS" (*Houston Chronicle*); "NEED HEALTH INSURANCE? GOOD LUCK" (*USA Today*). So too did the stories of people like Megan Janes-Smith, a recently unemployed 31-year-old living in Kalamazoo, Michigan. As she explained to a reporter, her husband's employer didn't offer coverage and her three-person family didn't have the $900 a month to buy coverage on their own. So she put off the x-rays recommended to treat her chronic shoulder condition, put up with the pain from her recurring sinus infections, and put out of her mind worries about the hospital bills she'd face in a medical emergency. "I'm trying not to lose my sanity," she said.

It took Washington a while to realize what was happening. Although policy wonks had been discussing the affordability of health insurance for years, politicians hadn't made a big deal out of it until late 1991. That's when an unheralded Pennsylvania Democrat, Harris Wofford, used the issue to defeat a heavily favored Republican in his bid for the U.S. Senate. Wofford's win catapulted health care to the top of the domestic political agenda. Soon both parties were promising ambitious government programs; even George Bush Sr. unveiled a proposal to give insurance to another 30 million or so people. By late 1993, when Bill Clinton formally introduced his own health care plan to Congress, few disputed one Republican senator's assessment that, "We will pass a law next year."

It didn't happen, of course. And in part because the Clinton plan was such a political fiasco, you rarely hear such grandiose talk today. Indeed, this month, as Congress debated whether to include health insurance benefits in an economic stimulus package, advocates proposed only modest, short-term initiatives intended to get the newly unemployed through the next several months. But that could all soon change. With premiums and unemployment on the rise once more, millions of people are losing their insurance, while millions more are starting to worry about it again. You can see it in those "old" headlines, which actually appeared in 2001. And you can tell by listening to Megan Janes-Smith of Kalamazoo, who lost her insurance earlier this year. Since March, according to an estimate by Families USA, more than half a million people have lost their health insurance. A recent analysis by Jonathan Gruber and Larry Levitt for the Kaiser Family Foundation estimated that 1.2 million people have lost insurance over the last year. And by the end of 2002, say other experts, the total number of uninsured Americans—now around 40 million—could rise to 45 million. What Washington doesn't yet understand is that we are

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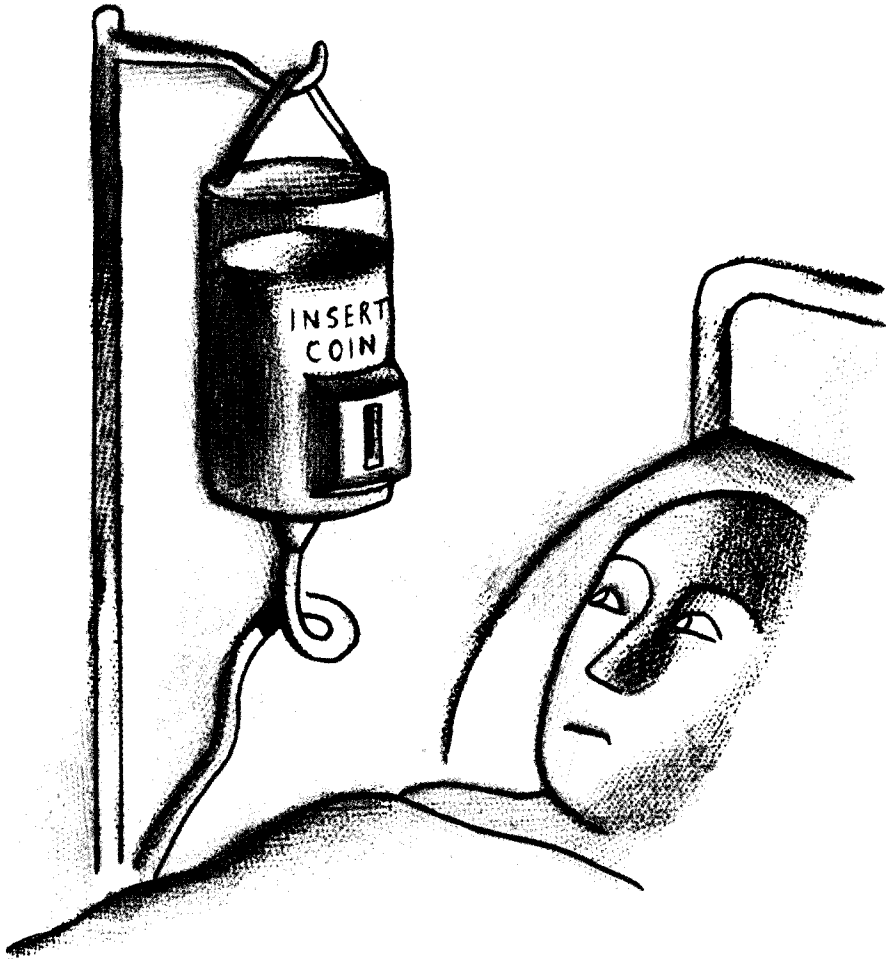
already in another health care crisis. And this one might be even worse than the last.

AS JOEL MILLER, policy director at the National Coalition on Health Care, puts it, we are about to enter the policy equivalent of "the perfect storm." One element is the recession. Since most non-elderly Americans get their insurance through their jobs, anything that increases joblessness inevitably reduces the ranks of the insured—either because people don't find new work, or because they end up in jobs that don't offer affordable insurance.

In theory, these people could go out and buy insurance on their own. In practice, that's simply not financially possible for most of the newly unemployed. Insurers generally charge individuals buying insurance more than they charge businesses buying coverage for their employees, in part because their actuarial tables show that individual buyers are less healthy on average. And if an insurance company decides you have a particular propensity for running up medical bills—and you can be sure it will try to find out—it will adjust its rates accordingly. Consider what happened earlier this year when the Kaiser Foundation created seven hypothetical consumers, each with past or present medical problems, and had them apply for coverage from 19 companies in eight markets across the country. The average premium was about $4,000 a year, often for reduced benefits. And those who got coverage offers—however expensive—were the lucky ones. Insurers rejected outright nearly half of the applications from a hypothetical 48-year-old woman who'd beaten breast cancer seven years before—and all the applications from a hypothetical 36-year-old man with HIV.

The newly unemployed, even those with serious medical conditions, do have one other recourse for obtaining private insurance: the federal program called COBRA. But as the acronym suggests, it is beguiling and merciless. Established in 1985, COBRA allows qualifying employees who have lost their jobs to buy into their company's group health care plans, at roughly the same rates, for up to 18 months (or longer in some states). The good news is that nearly five million people used COBRA to extend their health insurance in 1999. The bad news is that tens of millions more who lost their jobs didn't use COBRA. A big reason is expense. Yes, you get to buy into your old company's health insurance plan. But while your employer used to pick up part or most of the tab, now you have to pay the entire premium yourself—which generally comes to a few hundred dollars a month. The other reason for limited COBRA enrollment lies in that key word above: *qualifying* employee. COBRA only applies to companies with more than 20 workers and, naturally, only to companies that already offer their workers insurance. And studies show that of low-income Americans—i.e., the ones who most need affordable insurance—only one in three have a family member in a COBRA-eligible job.



DAVID SUTER

IF JOBLESSNESS WERE the only factor behind the rise of the uninsured, though, the United States wouldn't be facing a health care crisis. We could concentrate political resources on getting the economy going again, then hang on until most people return to the workforce. But joblessness isn't the only factor. Indeed, even if the economy were still going strong, the United States would still have a serious problem. The reason is the second element of Miller's "perfect storm": The price of health care is, once again, going through the roof.

The last time medical costs rose so quickly, in the 1980s and early 1990s, employers responded by switching from traditional "fee-for-service" insurance plans to managed care. Fee-for-service had essentially paid for whatever tests and treatments doctors and hospitals ordered, at whatever price they cared to charge—a recipe for spiraling inflation in a country with an ever-older population demanding ever-more-expensive treatments. Managed care sought to change these incentives. Health maintenance organizations would negotiate discounted rates with certain doctors and hospitals, then steer beneficiaries to

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these providers exclusively. The insurers would provide these same doctors and hospitals with financial incentives to contain expenses themselves, plus they would allow expensive tests and specialty treatment only in those cases the insurance companies themselves deemed medically necessary.

At first, managed care worked wonders on the bottom line. In 1988 health insurance premiums were rising an average of 12 percent annually; by 1996 (after most employers had switched to managed care) the rise in premiums was down to 0.8 percent—less than the rate of general inflation. But managed care's miraculous cost-savings have proven temporary. When HMOs first arrived on the scene, the new austerity sparked a wave of hospital closings and mergers. But now the hospitals and doctors that remain have consolidated into larger, more powerful bargaining units themselves, which means they can hold out for more lucrative contracts with insurance companies. In one particularly vivid example of how power has shifted, last year the Partners HealthCare System—led by Boston's two largest teaching hospitals—won higher payment rates from the state's third-largest insurance company by walking out on negotiations and threatening to stop accepting the company's coverage. A few years ago such hardball tactics would have been unthinkable; a hospital that walked away from negotiations would have found itself without patients, and out of business.

And doctors and hospitals aren't the only ones pushing back. As costs subsided in the late '90s, consumers stopped worrying that they'd lose their coverage and began focusing on the shortcomings of managed care. People don't like being told they can't see a specialist on their own, or that they can only go to certain hospitals, or that treatment decisions are subject to approval from a faceless insurance company bureaucrat. This festering resentment, fed by isolated but disturbing horror stories of people suffering grave injuries or deaths because of treatment denials, prompted lawmakers in many states to enact regulations insulating patients from managed care oversight. And while efforts to produce a national patients' bill of rights have failed in Congress, many consumers have successfully pressured their employers to offer plans with fewer restrictions. Perhaps the most visible sign of this market shift has been a mass migration from HMOs to preferred-provider organizations (PPOs), which allow beneficiaries to see doctors outside the insurance network for slightly higher co-payments. From 1996 to 2000, the percentage of people enrolled in PPOs nearly doubled, while the percentage in HMOs fell by one-third.

All of which has made insurance less onerous—and more expensive. According to a recent study published in *Health Affairs*, based on a survey of 2,000 companies, insurance premiums rose 11 percent from spring 2000 to spring 2001. That's the largest increase by far since the '80s. Depending on whose projections you believe, premiums will go up even faster next year, by 20 percent in some areas of the country. At the tail end of the '90s, when premiums first started kicking up, employers were willing to eat some of these increased costs because they were so desperate for workers. No longer. Now employers are going back to doing what they've usually done when the cost of insurance goes up: They're passing that cost along to their employees, in the form of higher co-payments, deductibles, or premium shares. According to a recent survey by Watson Wyatt Worldwide, more than half of all employers will require workers to pay a higher proportion of health insurance premiums next year than they did in 2001. Some companies, naturally, just aren't offering insurance at all, which is one reason the number of uninsured Americans is shooting back up.

THIS IS EXACTLY the situation government programs are supposed to remedy. In addition to Medicare—which provides universal insurance coverage for the elderly—the government has two public insurance programs, both aimed at helping the poor. One is Medicaid, which unlike Medicare is only partially financed by the federal government and is actually administered by the states. The other is also a federal-state partnership, the State Children's Health Insurance Program—known as CHIP or S-CHIP.

Generous funding of these programs in the last few years has yielded truly impressive results: For example, four years after its creation, S-CHIP now enrolls 3.3 million children. But this expansion was probably a one-time phenomenon—the fluky, if beneficial, result of overflowing state budgets during the '90s economic boom. There was so much money sloshing around that even relatively conservative states (though, notably, not the one then headed by our current president) found innovative ways to expand insurance eligibility. But now that the economy has come down to earth—and then some—state budgets are falling too. Which means that at the very time people need government safety-net insurance programs more than ever, most states are cutting them back.

This is the third element in our perfect storm, and it's a doozy. Going into this fiscal year, according to a Kaiser Foundation survey, 20 states were already expecting Medicaid deficits—and that was before September 11, and before anybody realized that the "slowdown" was really a recession. Ultimately, these deficits will lead to cuts, as they already have in places like Illinois. During the late '90s, as part of the state's welfare-to-work initiative, Illinois provided Medicaid coverage to 100,000 women who were former welfare recipients, even after they left the public-assistance rolls. Two weeks ago Governor George Ryan announced he was pulling the plug on that initiative, saving the state $17 million but more than likely consigning most of these women—who now work in low-wage jobs with no fringe benefits—to the ranks of the uninsured. One day earlier, Ryan approved another $30 million cut, under which Illinois will pay less money to the private insurance companies that cover Medicaid recipients on the state's behalf. That cut, too, will almost certainly lead to more people going without insurance. "That's where we have to make the cuts and that's where we're going to make the cuts, and we have no choice," Ryan said.

That sounds like a cop-out, but it is largely true. Many states have constitutions that prohibit running deficits. So while a few can supplement their health programs by drawing on rainy-day funds they wisely accumulated during the '90s, most would have to raise taxes or cut other spending in order to avoid Medicaid cuts. Neither strategy is terribly

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appealing in a recession, which is why the states begged the federal government to include Medicaid subsidies as part of the current stimulus package. Alas, the White House and Congress have resisted. Republicans (and too many Democrats) have no interest in handouts to the states that would require retracting some of this summer's tax cut. Meanwhile, the $28 billion in this year's budget that Congress had allocated for aid to the uninsured has disappeared, since by prior agreement the money could only be spent if the federal discretionary budget were still in surplus. Making matters worse, federal funding for S-CHIP will decline after next year unless Congress appropriates more money.

Behind public insurance programs lies one last safety net for those without private insurance: emergency rooms, which have become the health care provider of last resort for millions of uninsured Americans. But our emergency rooms are in no shape to deal with the surge in patients from this year's flu season, let alone a surge from next year's layoffs. This is another downside to managed care. In order to live within newly strict budgets, hospitals have cut back on the surplus supplies, surplus space, and surplus personnel they once maintained. But while this has made hospitals more efficient, it has also rendered them incapable of handling sudden increases in patient volume—and so they've simply started turning patients away. A recent survey conducted by Democratic staff from the House Government Reform Committee found that overcrowding caused "[s]ubstantial problems accessing emergency services" in 22 states. Some of the worst problems occurred in urban areas with high numbers of uninsured patients: Boston, Denver, St. Louis, Cleveland. Typical is Northridge Hospital Medical Center outside Los Angeles, more than one-third of whose emergency patients are on government insurance or are uninsured. In October, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, overcrowding forced it to divert ambulances more than half the time.

EVEN WHEN THE economy rebounds, employers will remain reluctant to pay high medical bills. And businesses can't very well reprise the strategy of the early 1990s. Even if they could convince employees to tolerate restrictions on treatment and choice of doctors, the shift in bargaining power away from the HMOs and back to the doctors and hospitals means managed care can't deliver the same kind of savings it once did. So employers will likely pass cost increases along to their employees, in the form of higher premiums and co-payments. Just ask the teachers who were striking in New Jersey over the last few weeks, whose main beef is a proposal to have them pay more of their health care costs.

Ultimately, there does have to be some cost-sharing—especially if employees are demanding expensive benefits such as free choice of doctors. But it's important to do so in a way that doesn't prevent people without money, or people with serious medical conditions, from getting the care they need. And that, unfortunately, is exactly where we are headed. As *The New York Times* reported last week, several major insurers, including Aetna, Humana, Cigna, and the United-Health Group, are rolling out a new type of plan that fundamentally changes the way insurance works. Under the new schemes, which some call "health savings accounts," an employee would receive an "allowance" of $2,000 or $3,000 to spend on medical care. If the employee ran up bills larger than that, he or she would have to pay them out of pocket, as much as $5,000, at which point the employer would pick up the rest.

It's not too hard to see why this sort of insurance would appeal to the employer and to the insurance company: They'd both be spending less money. Employees who don't go to the doctor's office often would come out ahead too, at least in the short term. But if you happen to be one of those unlucky souls who has an expensive medical condition, the new accounts could spell disaster. In one example cited by the *Times*, a family of three that included someone with chronic medical conditions would probably spend about $2,200 more per year than they would under a traditional insurance plan. In other words, the plans would take financial risk off the healthy and put it onto the sick—exactly the opposite of the social role insurance is meant to perform. The fact that so many of the nation's big insurance companies are introducing these plans suggests that, unlike medical savings accounts—a related idea hatched in right-wing think tanks that never really took off commercially—this new scheme has market appeal. Over time, it's not hard to imagine this style of insurance completely taking over, in the same way managed care swept through the market in the '90s.

About the only consolation might be that this new system would probably prove highly unpopular. The funny thing about illness is that it's pretty democratic—it affects everyone you know at some time, and some people you know all the time. A health insurance system that made illness such a crushing financial burden would inevitably affect not just the working poor, but large chunks of the middle class. And that would eventually produce a political backlash, even if Washington didn't immediately recognize it.

Which is more or less what happened last time. The signs of trouble—soaring premiums, overflowing emergency rooms—had been evident since the late 1980s. By early 1991, 36 million Americans had no health insurance, with more on the way. But it wasn't until that fall, when Wofford made the issue the centerpiece of his Senate campaign, that the political world took notice. A *USA Today* headline summed up the resulting avalanche of press coverage: "THE VOTERS SEND MESSAGE: FIX THE HEALTH-CARE CRISIS." Soon enough, both parties were touting ambitious proposals to help the uninsured.

Those proposals, of course, failed—with devastating political effects. Which is why for the last eight years, the Democrats have only nibbled around the problem of inadequate health insurance—a program for poor children here, a drug benefit for seniors there—and the Republicans, for the most part, have tried to avoid it altogether. But in the next few years, we are in store for another upheaval in American health care—and it might just shake up American politics as well. After all, the conventional wisdom that says bold thinking about health care is a political loser has been wrong before. Just ask Harris Wofford. ■

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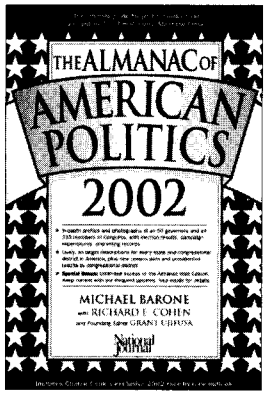
—*The Almanac of American Politics on Pennsylvania's 1st Congressional District*



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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Doing It Well

THIS COLUMN TRIES to find and celebrate new directing talents, such as Richard Linklater, Todd Field, Todd Solondz, Daniel Cohen, and Neil LaBute, who come along in sufficient number to belie any chatter about a talent drought. These are all independent film-makers, which is to say that they work with skimpy budgets and that their distributors have to scratch for screens. But this search for new talent, and for the kinds of films that the powerhouse boys are not making, is in one important sense extremely unfair. Some of the people working on big films are extraordinarily talented. We don't need to weep for them on their proverbial way to the bank, but still, their skills are often scanted because the pictures on which they work are mainstream commerce. The film world is not neatly divided in two, half independent and half blockbuster: several strata intervene. But it is too easy to ignore the art and craft in some of the money-makers.

This hit me particularly hard when I saw two new war films. The reticence of Abbas Kiarostami, the painterly texture of Gianni Amelio, the stoicism of Frieder Schlaich, all beautiful, could in a way obscure the dazzling skill with which those war films were made. In whole value **Spy Game** (Universal Pictures) and **Behind Enemy Lines** (20th Century Fox) are not mentionable alongside the films of the men cited above, but should the first-class talents that made them be unappreciated? Was Gregg Toland any less a master cinematographer when he shot *The Goldwyn Follies* than when he shot *Citizen Kane*?

One caution. When we talk about present-day films, we have to allow for digital increments, and it is not always easy to identify them. Still, this identification is only a matter of the moment: the need for it will pass. Digital means are becoming an accepted part of film-making like every other film process, and will become no more a stigma than digital editing.

Tony Scott directed *Spy Game* with something more than speed, with an adroit insistence that makes us feel that the film itself is responding to the time pressures in its story. The telling becomes part of the tale. Christian Wagner, the editor, gives us just enough of every sequence, every shot, to keep us informed but hungry. Dan Mindel's camera seems to observe wryly: "OK, we can now show you mankind's messes in Panavision and gorgeous color; but how does that help human blunders?"

Similar praise, too, for the makers of *Behind Enemy Lines*. This is John Moore's first feature, and the producer engaged him, we are told, on the strength of some video games that Moore had made. Smart producer! Much of the film takes place on a U.S. aircraft carrier off the Balkan coast, and Moore treats the huge complex of the carrier as a steel-gray city. Certainly this floating immensity has been captured before in films, but never more integrally, without showing off. The editor, Paul Martin Smith, has (as Walter Murch urges editors) found the language of the film and speaks it tersely. Especial honor to Brendan Galvin's cinematography. At least half of the film takes place in the Bosnian countryside, and Galvin's framing and color scheme are a visual dirge.

It heightens admiration, rather than the reverse, for these men and their colleagues to add that the screenplays of these two films are assembly-line stuff. (I haven't even mentioned the propulsive scores, by Harry Gregson-Williams and Don Davis, but that's a subject in itself.) The most interesting point about the screenplays is that they have two marked similarities. In both films government officials are trying to help one of their men in enemy hands; and in both films there is dissension among those officials.

In *Spy Game*, Robert Redford is a veteran CIA operative, a maverick who has rubbed a lot of his bosses the wrong way, often by his successes. He has long had a tetchy relationship with a younger agent, Brad Pitt, whom he has known since their Marine days in Vietnam. Pitt, on his own, plunges into China to rescue an imprisoned young woman; Redford, in Washington, learns that Pitt has been caught and sentenced to death as a spy. The story, timed against the execution date, is about the efforts to get Pitt out—along with the young woman. The obligatory final twist makes us wonder why it was not thought of earlier.

This picture was finished months ago, of course, but we cannot help noting that, in these days when public confidence in the CIA is not at its height, we see a lot of petty bickering and office politicking in their meetings. Two other points. Brad Pitt, possibly the current Number One Sex Star, continues to choose roles that present him in unglamorous light. Redford, who in the flashback scenes simply wears more hair—no facial adjustment—once more has no amour on screen, other than one peck on the cheek.

In *Behind Enemy Lines*, Gene Hackman is an admiral in charge of a carrier and a battle group. The war between Bosnia and Serbia has reached some sort of truce, which NATO wants to maintain. One of the routine reconnaissance flights sent out by the carrier accidentally discovers and photographs a secret Serbian base. The Serbs launch missiles and shoot down the plane, and the pilot and navigator parachute down. The Serbs find the injured pilot and coldly kill him. The navigator is then hunted through hills and towns by Serbs who want to erase him, too. Electronic monitoring allows the carrier staff to see what is happening, but Hackman is restrained by his NATO superior from helping the navigator. NATO does not want the truce disturbed. At last Hackman makes his choice, long foreseen. (Would an admiral actually take part in a helicopter rescue mission?)

Owen Wilson, previously visible in small-scale films, is energetic and unself-conscious as the stranded navigator, though his performance could use a few other colors. (He has no special reaction to the fact that, at one point, he has to hide beneath rotting corpses.) Hackman, as the admiral, is Hackman. This is meant as praise—of a phenomenon. We are all familiar with film stars who bring every part they play into their aureole of personality, such as John Wayne, Gary Cooper, and so forth. But Hackman has no personality, in any charismatic sense. What he has is himself: and he is able to bring the characters that he plays—a wider range than we might remember—into the core of his own being. He does not engulf them with a unique star power; he finds a correspondence for them within himself. His method reminds me more of a writer than an actor. A writer need have no personality in the theatrical sense; he need only have imaginative flexibility for all the characters he writes about, some source in himself for their creation. As we all know, Flaubert

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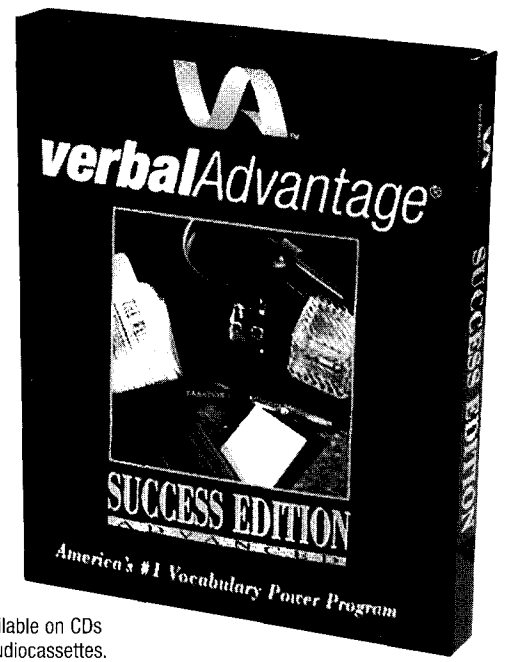

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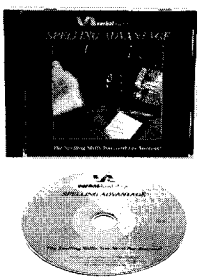

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said, "*Madame Bovary, c'est moi.*" Hackman, who would probably scoff at this comparison, says, "Admiral Riegart is me."

For actors—good ones, anyway—this procedure is unusual. Tom Wilkinson, of *In the Bedroom*, certainly found in himself the doctor whom he plays, but then altered his thought process, his speech, his physical being to accommodate this other man. Hackman simply welcomed in the admiral and, out of Hackman, spoke the truth of him. (I wish only that he had more scenes, more complicated ones; the role is somewhat underdeveloped.)

The four leading men in these two pictures are assets and pleasures. But, to end where I began, the best pleasure in these films is in the manner of their making. Indisputably they are only trade items, but they prove yet again that Hollywood is still the home of unsurpassable cinematic skills. ■

When serious music mattered.

Double Trouble

By RICHARD TARUSKIN

I.

THE SIGNAL FACT of Dmitry Shostakovich's career was his eventual status as the one and only Soviet artist to be claimed equally, and equally ardently, by the official establishment and the rising counter-culture alike. The achievement was not his alone. It was the convoluted result of the enormous talent that he was dealt, the all-too-interesting times in which he lived, the nature of the art in which he worked, and his capacity for maintaining a poker face. His music was at once an irresistible expressive conveyance and a tabula rasa on which all and sundry could inscribe their various messages with a minimum of resistance. Shostakovich, in sum, became the very embodiment of existential doubleness, a distinction that magnified his significance far beyond the frontiers of the society that he served, and far beyond the confines of the aesthetic.

The enormous burgeoning of worldwide interest in Shostakovich since his death in 1975 has been a token of the twentieth century's anxious efforts to come to terms with the historical legacy of his doubleness—efforts that will inevitably continue far into the future. And as they do so, Shostakovich will surely overtake Schoenberg and Stravinsky for recognition as "the most consequential composer of the twentieth century," which is what Susan McClary, a leader in postmodernist (or "new") musicology, somewhat surprisingly persisted in calling Schoenberg at a recent symposium organized in his honor by the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Schoenberg's and Stravinsky's impacts were immense, of course. But they were felt mainly within the world of music composition—the world that is treated as the entire subject of music history only by "old" musicologists. Shostakovich was consequential within far more consequential domains: those of music's meaning and its social reception. These have become the subject matter of a newer, and far more consequential, musicology.

RICHARD TARUSKIN is preparing a general history of music for publication by Oxford University Press.

STORY OF A FRIENDSHIP: THE LETTERS OF DMITRY SHOSTAKOVICH TO ISAAK GLIKMAN, 1941–1975
translated by Anthony Phillips
(Cornell University Press, 340 pp., $35)

IRONY, SATIRE, PARODY AND THE GROTESQUE IN THE MUSIC OF SHOSTAKOVICH: A THEORY OF MUSICAL INCONGRUITIES
by Esti Sheinberg
(Ashgate, 378 pp., $89.95)

Stravinsky tried to insulate his art from questions about its meaning. Those famous fighting words in his autobiography in 1936—"music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all"—are no longer taken seriously by any serious musician. They now serve only as a memento of their time, when artists—especially uprooted aristocrats such as Stravinsky—were frantic to protect their creative autonomy from the totalitarian threat. Schoenberg, believing that art had a history separable from that of the social world, and believing that that history imposed inexorable obligations on serious artists, tried to insulate his art from social reception. He organized the Society for Private Performances in Vienna, where significant works of new music were disseminated among musicians so as to further the stylistic and technical evolution that history mandated in an atmosphere uncontaminated by publicity. It provided the conceptual model and inspiration for the retreat of advanced musical composition into universities and think tanks after World War II. It was a self-deluded, self-defeating mission. "Autonomy" quickly metamorphosed into sheer irrelevance.

LIKE MOST MEMBERS of my generation, I was reared, musically and musicologically, in this atmosphere. I was taught to disdain the artistic products of societies in which the creative autonomy of artists was not guaranteed. The only time I recall hearing the music of Shostakovich in the classroom during my undergraduate and graduate years (roughly the 1960s) was when the "invasion" episode from his Seventh ("Leningrad") Symphony was juxtaposed with Bartók's mockery of it in his Concerto for Orchestra, and we were all invited to mock along. Then, I suppose, we went back to analyzing Schoenberg's technical innovations.

Soon afterward I was forced to revise my opinion, not only about Shostakovich but about my own education in music. I spent the academic year 1971–1972 as an exchange student at the Moscow Conservatory, researching a dissertation on Russian opera in the 1860s. The better part of my time, in every sense of the word, was devoted to socializing with my Soviet counterparts and attending concerts and opera performances. Many of those events were devoted, naturally, to works by Shostakovich. At one concert I heard the Seventh Symphony, performed under Kirill Kondrashin in the Conservatory's fabled Great Hall. I knew the work not only as the butt of Bartók's sarcasm, but also as the object of one of Virgil Thomson's snottiest reviews. Connoisseurs of musical invective knew Thomson's text practically by heart. It opened with the remark that "whether one is able to listen without mind-wandering to the Seventh Symphony of Dmitri Shostakovich probably depends on the rapidity of one's musical perceptions; it seems to have been written for the slow-witted, the not very musical and the distracted"; and it ended with an immortal insult: "That he has so deliberately diluted his matter, adapted it, by both excessive simplification and excessive repetition, to the comprehension of a child of eight, indicates that he is willing to write down to a real or fictitious

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psychology of mass consumption in a way that may eventually disqualify him for consideration as a serious composer."

Since deriding this symphony was a badge of musical sophistication where I came from, I glanced at appropriate moments at my Soviet companions, hoping to exchange a wink. But no: my friends, who were at least as learned and as intelligent as I was, and who were normally just as irreverent about everything that students are supposed to be irreverent about, were mesmerized. I glanced around the hall and noticed my scholarly adviser, a deeply erudite musicologist, and also some composition students I knew from the dormitory who were studying with Denisov and Schnittke, the touted non-conformists of the day, and even (privately) with Philip Gershkovich, the shadowy ex-Webernite who was keeping the sputtering flame of modernism alive somewhere in darkest Moscow. They, too, were in a trance.

These were not eight-year-olds. There was nothing wrong with their musical perceptions. For their quick wits and musicality I could certainly vouch. The awful thought seized me that they valued this music, which I had been taught to despise, more highly than I valued any music, and that Shostakovich meant more to his society (and their society) than any composer meant to my society. For the first time there occurred to me, half-formed, the unbearable suspicion that the ways of listening to music and thinking about music that had been instilled in me and all my peers at home were impoverished ways.

In the case of the Seventh Symphony, the thought could be somewhat allayed by recalling its special historical circumstances. The audience around me, I told myself, was responding not to the symphony, but to the memories of (or the propaganda about) the war. The war, not Shostakovich, was the artist who was working such an uncanny effect on them. It was a relatively benign example, or so I let myself think, of Soviet brainwashing. But later in my time in Moscow I attended two concerts at which later works of Shostakovich were played that carried no such ready-made associations, and at which the composer appeared on stage to receive applause.

At one of them, Mstislav Rostropovich, already under a gathering cloud for sheltering Solzhenitsyn (who was in attendance, and much gawked at), played the Second Cello Concerto, which had been written for and dedicated to him five years earlier. The same electric atmosphere pervaded the hall, but this time it was an atmosphere not of patriotic nostalgia but of risk. It was then that the idea of Shostakovich's doubleness struck me, and with tremendous force. It was not just Shostakovich's unique stature among Soviet composers that I sensed. His stature was unique among all the artists whom I could name. It was a backhanded fulfillment of the old Socialist Realist ideal—and the older Tolstoyan ideal—of an art that would speak with equal directness and equal consequence to all levels of society, from the least educated to the most educated.

Obviously, this fulfillment was not to be credited in this case to Socialist Realism. By the time he wrote the Second Cello Concerto in 1966, Shostakovich had made a *reprise de contact* with his modernist youth. His new works were regarded as "difficult"—a difficulty that members of the audience acknowledged, but that did not faze them the way new music fazed audiences in the West. Still less, of course, was the universality of Shostakovich's appeal a matter of Christian fellowship, in the manner of Tolstoy. So what was its source?

The first glimmer of an answer came on the other occasion at which I saw Shostakovich: the premiere of the Fifteenth Symphony, his last symphony, led by his son Maxim in the Great Hall on January 8, 1972. The work, with its jolly quotation from Rossini in the first movement and its ravaged quotation from Wagner in the last, was puzzling, as everyone with whom I conversed agreed. It was not much liked, actually. But the outpouring of love that greeted the gray, stumbling, begoggled figure of the author, then sixty-five and beset by a multitude of infirmities, was not just an obeisance to the Soviet composer laureate. It was a grateful, emotional salute to a cherished life companion, a fellow citizen and fellow sufferer, who had forged a mutually sustaining relationship with his public that was altogether outside the experience of any musician in my part of the world.

Dmitry Shostakovich by Jack Coughlin for The New Republic

I was shaken that night in a way that no concert before or since has shaken me. If the overall effect of a year lived in the Soviet Union during its Brezhnevite "stagnation" was to rattle me out of my complacency regarding the inhumanity of the Soviet regime, the effect of this particular evening was to rattle me out of my complacency regarding the inhumanity of the musical aesthetic in which I had been raised—an ideal that nurtured self-regard and social indifference, and that placed the highest value on *de l'audace, toujours de l'audace*. That aesthetic has just reached its farcical epitome with Karlheinz Stockhausen's enviously admiring response to the destruction of the World Trade Center. But long before Stockhausen turned it into a grim laughingstock, the avant-garde position—in effect, the aesthetic of spoiled brats—had become a cultural leftover, emptied of

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appeal not just for audiences but for artists as well. What it lacked, precisely, is the resonance that comes from doubleness. And the source of doubleness is social engagement.

II.

SHOSTAKOVICH NEVER SOUGHT his doubleness. It was thrust upon him on January 28, 1936—the year in which Stravinsky published his autobiography, with its formalist credo—when the twenty-nine-year-old composer was not only attacked but mortally threatened ("It could end very badly...") in the pages of *Pravda* by what everyone was soon calling The Historic Document—namely the famous and ominously unsigned editorial "Muddle Instead of Music" that ended the brilliant two-year career of his opera *The Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, during which time it had gone around the world.

Until that point Shostakovich had himself been a spoiled brat of sorts. His preeminence among the first generation of Soviet-educated composers was assured by the premiere of his First Symphony, when he was nineteen. After Bruno Walter played the work in Berlin in February 1928, the composer, twenty-one years old, became a world celebrity, and he would remain one for the rest of his life. In 1927, Shostakovich received a state commission for a large choral-orchestral composition to mark the tenth anniversary of the revolution. Originally titled "To October," it entered his catalogue as his Second Symphony. In 1929, Vladimir Mayakovsky asked him to furnish incidental music for the play *The Bedbug*, after which Shostakovich became the most sought-after composer for the Soviet stage and the fledgling Soviet film industry. Between 1929 and the date of the *Pravda* denunciation, he composed seven incidental scores (including one for Nikolai Akimov's sarcastically "revisionist" staging of *Hamlet* at the Vakhtangov Theater) and three ballets. *Lady Macbeth* was Shostakovich's second opera. The first was the wildly surrealistic *The Nose* (1930), after Gogol, with its all-percussion entr'actes, its snoring and gargling cavatinas, its mock-castrato constables. During the first decade of his creative career, Shostakovich was the musical spokesman and the darling of the young Soviet state, thriving in the din of industrialization and social experiment, giving interviews to foreign correspondents and sending his works all over Europe and America for performance.

His musical style during this period is often called satirical. It owed a lot to the Weimar Republic's we-won't-be-fooled-again aesthetic of *Neue Sachlichkeit* or "New Objectivity," musically exemplified by the young Hindemith, whom Shostakovich idolized. Its satire arose out of a play of incongruities—a rhetorical doubleness—that undermined eloquence and "seriosity." The most primitive (and popular) examples were "wrong note" pieces such as the Polka from Shostakovich's ballet *The Age of Gold* (1930), in which dissonance, normally an expressive device, is used pervasively within a trivial dance genre in which expressive dissonance is rarely, if ever, employed. The incongruity calls both components into question. If a polka, why dissonant? If dissonant, why a polka? In its original context a third incongruous element was introduced in the form of top-hatted "burzhuis" on stage, canting in Geneva on behalf of disarmament and world peace. The hypocritical rhetoric of the League of Nations (from which the Soviet Union was then excluded) may have been the original target of satire, the polka mocking its pretension, the dissonance its absurdity. In a concert performance, the venue itself could become the butt, as Shostakovich implied when he arranged the Polka a year later for string quartet, the quintessentially "burzhui" medium (and one for which he had not yet composed seriously).

In Shostakovich's early symphonies and concertos, the *lyogkiy zhanr* ("light genre") itself became the incongruous marker, with or without wrong notes. The cabaret waltz that assumes the role of "second theme" in the first movement of the First Symphony, or the madcap galops in the second and fourth movements (in which a solo piano unexpectedly participates, recalling the fledgling composer's employment in silent-movie theaters), suggested a brash, good-humored skepticism toward canonical genres that was easily correlated with the brashness and the healthy cynicism of the limber, fast-moving young Soviet state in its time of (as yet relatively uncoerced) optimism. That happy iconoclasm acted as a preservative through which a high professional culture that might have seemed outmoded, along with the class system that supported it—and did so seem to the many clamoring proletarianist factions who called for its dismantling—could be adapted to the new order and thus have a Soviet future.

The same techniques, adapted to the purposes of characterization, found their most trenchant application in *The Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, completed in 1932. Nikolai Leskov, the author of the horror story on which the opera was based, had cast the title character, a multiple murderess, as a she-devil pure and simple. Shostakovich took it upon himself, in a move all too characteristic of the high-Stalinist onrush then in progress, to rehabilitate her, even to make her a class heroine, by dehumanizing all her victims and potential judges through admixtures of low genre. In taking his famous umbrage at the graphic sex scenes, Stalin missed the Stalinist message of the work (not that there was any real message in "Muddle Instead of Music," beyond the warning that no one was safe). Others at home read it loud and clear; but abroad the stylistic incongruities tended to baffle and offend. Elliott Carter, who caught the opera in a very late staging in East Berlin, dismissed it on the high-modernist grounds of stylistic disunity, and found "unaccountable" the opera's capital sociopolitical stroke: the mitigation of the innocent husband's murder by accompanying it with a typically trivializing galop that deprived him of his humanity.

IT WAS THE banning of this inhumane opera that humanized its composer and turned him into an emblem of doubleness—a doubleness that ineluctably colored the reception of his works from then on (and was later read back, inevitably, into his early works as well). Shostakovich was now a marked man, in every sense of the word. His victimization by the regime effectively transformed him into a semiotic marker. Every one of his subsequent compositions now had a subtext. That subtext, ironically enough, was first foisted upon the composer by the regime itself, when it commissioned from Shostakovich (or from somebody) a newspaper article published under the composer's byline that characterized his Fifth Symphony (1937) as "a Soviet artist's creative response to just criticism," and described the work as a record of "all that I have thought and felt" since being attacked in *Pravda*.

That opened up the floodgates to the Babel—or at least the babble—of conflicting interpretations that has since swirled around every single one of his works. Everything was read as a creative response to the totalitarian state, all the more so after the next bout of victimization: the so-called Zhdanovshchina, a series of musical show trials convened by Andrey Zhdanov, Stalin's de facto cultural commissar, at which all the major Soviet composers were forced to make groveling recantations of their "formalist" misdeeds, and which culminated in the promulgation on February 10, 1948 of the infamous Resolution on Music of the Central Committee of the All-Union Soviet Communist Party (Bolshevik).

For a long time, only the official interpretations had access to the Soviet public media; but even the published reviews and analyses were subjected to Aesopian construals, and a counter-literature of pri-

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vate diary entries, word of mouth, émigré publications, and samizdat began to gather around Shostakovich. One of the earliest examples to see print came in 1951 with the publication of *Taming of the Arts*, a memoir by Juri Jelagin (more commonly transliterated as Yury Elagin), a postwar émigré who had been a violinist at the Vakhtangov Theater and had attended one of the early Leningrad performances of the Fifth. "Later," he wrote,

> when I tried to analyze the reason for the devastating impression the Fifth Symphony made on me and on the entire audience I came to the conclusion that its musical qualities, no matter how great, were by themselves not enough to create that effect.... The Soviet government had set the stage for the incredible triumph of the gifted composer with long months of persecution and with the senseless attacks on his works. The educated Russians who had gathered in the auditorium that night had staged a demonstration expressing their love for his music, as well as their indignation at the pressure that had been exerted in the field of art and their sympathy and understanding for the victim.

Shostakovich managed to maintain his doubleness, and the consequent social value of his reception, first by maintaining a near-perfect silence, rarely if ever offering any interpretive commentary on his work except the kind that, by appearing under fully controlled government auspices, guaranteed an Aesopian reading; and second, by profoundly altering his stylistic manner after the watershed of 1936. This was indeed a creative response. It could be read as conformism, but it also managed vastly to stimulate the unofficial interpretive pluralism that turned Shostakovich's music—or, rather, the reception of it—into the secret diary of a nation.

III.

In the aftermath of the diatribe in *Pravda*, Shostakovich renounced his older satirical manner and replaced it with what might best be called heroic classicism. Seemingly in keeping with official demands, he adopted a suitably exalted "high style" for the properly reverential positive treatment of Soviet reality. Following the example of Beethoven—particularly in the Ninth Symphony, which shared his own Fifth Symphony's key of D minor—but also following the Socialist Realist precepts then being worked out for music (by, among others, the musicologist Boris Asafiev, who codified the theoretical categories of "musical imagery" and "intonation"), Shostakovich began loading his work, especially his large instrumental compositions, with what musicologists in the West now call "topics" (from the Greek *topoi*). These are musical morphemes, basic semantic units that are marked by associations of various kinds—ecclesiastical, martial, pastoral, whatever. They can refer to everyday musical genres, or to specific musical works, or to the phenomenal world through onomatopoeia (or through metonymy, as when a sudden rapid scale in a high "bright" register evokes lightning, or an up-and-down contour suggests water). They can be "iconic," suggesting modes of human behavior indicative of affect. They can be straightforward or they can be distorted—in rhythm, in harmony, in tempo, in timbre, in contour.

The naïve or ideal view of musical topics, the view espoused by Asafiev, is that they render the content of music more explicit, hence more accessible (and more susceptible to censorship and control). In actual practice they easily lead to a Bakhtinian "carnivalism," especially when they are as brusquely contrasted, or as violently exaggerated, as they often are in Shostakovich. Above all, they are transferable, through the listener's own repertoire of associations. A vivid example is the reception of Shostakovich's Eleventh Symphony (1957), somewhat belatedly commemorating the semi-centennial of the "first" Russian revolution of 1905. The movements carry titles that ostensibly specify (that is, limit) the referential significance of the topics and the images, which include old revolutionary songs and lots of violent percussion.

The music is perfectly adequate to the program. Anna Akhmatova, no paragon of conformism, straightforwardly praised the imagery of the first movement ("The Palace Square") for the way it conjured up the vast, quiet expanse of the Winter Palace grounds and the atmosphere of foreboding that she remembered from having lived through the events depicted. Shostakovich was sent on a goodwill tour of Italy and France, the two Western European countries with the strongest Communist parties, in May, 1958. The Eleventh Symphony, which had been awarded a Lenin Prize, was given its foreign premieres at this time (and was recorded in Paris under André Cluytens), and it was effusively praised for its vivid embodiment of the hopes of progressive humanity. The French composer Georges Auric sang it a paean (*Dmitri Chostakovitch, j'écoute, nous écoutons!*) precisely for its Socialist Realist virtues of accessibility and clarity of expression:

> It is "as an open book" that our composer

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> is to be deciphered. From night to full sunlight, he avoids having any "secret," and does not seek to keep for himself and a few chosen ones the keys to his language and his heart. We are here in an authentically "public" domain, and—let it immediately be added—in the highest meaning of such a term. Anyone who wishes may enter into it and share in the special radiance of such music.

Meanwhile, back home, as numerous memoirs now attest, the second movement of the symphony ("January Ninth"), with its big bangs, was being widely read by audiences primed to Shostakovich's endemic doubleness not as a depiction of "Bloody Sunday," the massacre of peaceful petitioners by Czarist troops, but as a principled protest against the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolt in 1956.

Which was it? Silly question! Guns go bang whether wielded by Czarists or Soviets, and all that Shostakovich had put into his score (that is, into "the music itself") was the bang. One could argue at any length and any heat that the subtitle favored the one view, but no argument could prevent an audience from assembling in a concert hall and deriving from the other view an elating (and risk-free!) sense of solidarity in protest that was otherwise beyond its reach. One chose the reading that suited one's needs, and in the Soviet Union there was an enormous need for that choice. Never was the special nature and the special value of music so nobly affirmed as it was by the sheer interpretive opportunism that Shostakovich offered listeners, thanks to the inherent polysemy of the medium in which he worked, and the invitation to double reading that his personal circumstances extended.

THAT HUGE SOCIAL value is what I witnessed in Moscow when I caught my glimpses of the precious, infirm composer and was so greatly moved. I did not know how to name it at the time. And there are very many who cannot see it even now. For—strange to say—there seems to be less understanding abroad of Shostakovich's doubleness now, especially in the uncomprehending West, than there was during Soviet power. Most of the late-Soviet and post-Soviet literature has been an attempt to reduce that doubleness to singleness, albeit the singleness opposite to what the party had once tried to enforce.

The new party line traces its origin to *Testimony*, the volume of "Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich as related to and edited by Solomon Volkov" that appeared in 1979, when the Cold War was about to enter its final phase (the Reagan presidency, the Afghan adventure). It portrays the composer as an implacable enemy of the Evil Empire who used his music to send explicitly dissident, explicitly anti-Communist messages. This is the model according to which Shostakovich has been marketed for the last two decades, very successfully, in the West.

Testimony was easily exposed by scholars as a fraud within a year of its publication, and evidence has been mounting ever since. (The coup de grâce is about to be delivered in a forthcoming essay by Laurel Fay, *Testimony*'s most persistent and effective critic and the author of the only factually reliable biography of Shostakovich in English.) It has been published by now in some thirty languages, but Volkov, who owns the rights to it, has never allowed publication of the original Russian text, a fact that speaks for itself.

Still, the scholarly objections have been dependably shouted down by a host of political and commercial exploiters (and a few timorous or dull-witted academics), and there is no reason to expect them to stop. In a short history of Russian music published in Dutch in 1996 and just issued in an English translation by the University of California Press, Francis Maes, the Belgian impresario who directs the Flanders Festival and who has himself participated in the commercial exploitation of the dissidence myth, atones by unsparingly setting out the exploiters' motives and strategies in a section called "Shostakovich and the Modern Music Market." One of the ugliest tactics has been the systematic vilification of Laurel Fay in a fashion that farcically replays the tragic tactics of the Zhdanovshchina.

IV.

THAT IS WHY one extends such a hopeful welcome to Esti Sheinberg's book. It is a study that not only accepts the doubleness of Shostakovich's creative persona, but sets out to analyze it. The author is a semiotician by training rather than a Shostakovich specialist. She was attracted to Shostakovich precisely by the interpretive conflicts that surround his legacy, which seemed to promise a rich field for the study of music as a sign system and, in particular, as a means of approaching "the overall semantic structure of ambiguity" in a non-verbal medium. "Rather than focusing on ways 'to get to correct solutions' and decide which element of a certain ambiguity is to be preferred," Sheinberg writes, "this study examines the various ways in which musical correlations of semantic ambiguities are created and how they work as artistic expressions." Instead of replaying the behavior of Shostakovich's audiences and invoking semiotics opportunistically to support arbitrary or tendentious interpretations, she purports to take a distanced view, setting Shostakovich's works within the broad context of structuralist semiotics and the history of its applications, within the history of artistic irony in all media, and in light of its various philosophical and political critiques.

Building on the work of linguists and music semioticians such as Algirdas Greimas, Edwin Battistella, Eero Tarasti, Robert Hatten, and Raymond Monelle, Sheinberg shows how the topics that Shostakovich manipulates are often deployed as "contrareities," contradictory pairs that are defined not in absolute terms but within a given cultural context. Normally one member of a contrareity is taken as a norm or default mode, and the other as a "marked" deviation. To boil her central claim down to a single (and oversimplified) sentence, she contends—and succeeds in demonstrating—that musical irony is achieved when a marked element is treated as if it were unmarked.

This is a useful model. I have been tacitly applying it above in my descriptions of such pieces as the *Age of Gold* Polka and the First Symphony. It works best when the contrareities are simple binarisms (consonance versus dissonance; high culture versus low culture). This is the level at which satire operates. Sheinberg is well aware that this simple level does not exhaust the possibilities for musical ambiguity or its interpretation. She astutely associates the watershed in Shostakovich's career in 1936 with a shift in the nature of his ironic practice. Once a (mere) satirist, for whom irony was a means toward a debunking end (irony as stimulus, in Kierkegaard's terminology), the composer became, in the battered latter half of his career, an existential ironist for whom irony was a detached and melancholy worldview (irony as terminus). "Like a half-smiling, resigned Pierrot," she writes, "Shostakovich's music seems to dance on a tightrope, letting its unresolvable incongruities express the infinite provisionality of existential irony."

In a brief historical survey, Sheinberg recounts the ethical objections that melioristic or progressive thinkers such as Hegel and Marx have leveled at half-smiling existential irony, regarding it as nihilistic, alienating, degenerate. That already begins to account for the official suspicion that always dogged Shostakovich under the high-Stalinist regime, and the fear of the uncontainable that his powerful music has always inspired in authoritarians (Soviet or anti-Soviet), leading to all the attempts at containment, whether by denunciation or adulation, coercion or cajolery, censorship or co-option, but never to neglect or indiffer-

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ence. Shostakovich was perhaps the most pestered composer who ever lived, and surely the most posthumously pestered. Better than any previous writer, Sheinberg shows why.

UNFORTUNATELY, HER PRACTICE falls short of her theory. Even when dealing with the later work, she tries "to get to correct solutions," subjecting works such as the Thirteenth Symphony and especially the song cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry* (everybody's favorite hobbyhorse) to readings just as opportunistic and limiting as anyone else's—often relying for evidence, it pains me to report, on *Testimony*. In another unsuccessful reading, she ventures to isolate as many as four layers of definite, mutually exclusive meaning in the tiny Prelude for piano, op. 34, no. 2, usually heard as an innocently humorous "wrong note" parody of the "Canto gitano" from Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio espagnol* (which was itself a parody). Arbitrary segmentation, the great bane of ordinary musical analysis, becomes even more of an encumbrance here than usual, because the stakes have been raised.

Like other semioticians who have tackled music, Sheinberg relies heavily on analogies to literature (or literary criticism) and painting, where the semantics are presumed to be more stable. That presumption having been so damagingly challenged by poststructuralist theory, it would have been much more useful to let music dictate the semantic terms and provide a model for literature. But even if one grants her premises, Sheinberg's literary analogies can be naïvely literalistic. She seems to imply that Shostakovich learned his rhetorical strategies from the Russian Formalists and Bakhtin, wasting many pages attempting to show that it was not unlikely that Shostakovich was not unaware of this critic or that one, or that he knew someone who knew someone who knew someone else. At one point she even proposes that Shostakovich's topical allusiveness "might be the result of an attempt to apply Bakhtin's ideas about literary plurivocality to music." But it is critics, in this case Sheinberg, who "apply" such things, not composers.

The source of all of these difficulties is Sheinberg's unwillingness to shed the notion that musical meaning, simple or complex, is something that is vested in it by the creator. Shostakovich's doubleness, in her view, is entirely of his making. Her reluctance to acknowledge that irony is as much a way of reading as a way of writing is a dated prejudice that greatly limits the explanatory reach of her theory. Her treatment of Shostakovich's doubleness finally remains univocal, and misses at least half of the story. It will be surpassed, and soon. But whoever does the surpassing will have to take Sheinberg's work on board. Despite its limitations, she has made an indispensable contribution to the analysis of Shostakovich's creative potency, and to the understanding of how his meanings were constructed.

V.

THE LETTERS IN *Story of a Friendship*, addressed to and now edited by the theater historian Isaak Glikman, were originally published in Moscow in 1993. By now they have been well assimilated into the scholarly literature (and, to a lesser extent, even the popular literature) about the composer. Glikman was not only a confidant of Shostakovich, but also a frequent factotum who served as unpaid secretary, occasional ghostwriter, and ever-ready errand runner. His portrayal of Shostakovich, reflexively aping the manner of Soviet biography, is hagiographical, although the canonizing authority is now more anti-Soviet than pro-Soviet. His book shares with Soviet publications some other annoying habits, including frequent and very obtuse editorial interventions (some of them consolidated, abridged, or omitted by the capable translator Anthony Phillips) to control the reader's response. I have strong suspicions, too, that the texts it transmits—reportedly dictated by Glikman to a stenographer—have been silently "corrected," like those published in Soviet times.

The most noteworthy news item in the collection concerns the poignant Eighth Quartet (1960), dedicated "to the victims of war and fascism," but almost universally read as a rueful musical autobiography because all of its themes are derived from the composer's musical monogram—DSCH, which equals D, E-flat, C, B as named in German—and placed in counterpoint with a web of self-quotations, and also with a famous revolutionary prison song. In his letter to Glikman dated July 19, 1960, the composer remarked that the work was dedicated to his own memory, and Glikman's commentary explains that it was composed in a fit of self-loathing after Shostakovich had allowed himself to be recruited for membership in the Communist Party as part of a campaign to validate Khrushchev's liberalizing moves by mobilizing the support of the intelligentsia. (The clinching argument was the reminder that Khrushchev had authorized the partial rescinding of the Resolution on Music that was promulgated in 1948.) The juxtaposition of the monogram and the prison song was in effect the composer's apology for his craven behavior, a reminder that he was "tortured by grievous unfreedom," as the words of the song declare.

The story is plausible, and it answers a frequently asked question, namely why Shostakovich joined up as a Communist just as the dissident movement, with which so many now want to associate him, was getting under way. And yet the actual circumstances of the quartet's composition (assuming that they are these) did not prevent audiences from being deeply moved by it when it was interpreted, and promoted by the cultural bureaucracy, in accordance with its stated dedication. The actual musical content—construed as sonic gestures, topics, "intonations"—supports either reading, or both. There is no reason, apart from political bias, to regard them as contradictory.

Those looking for corroboration of Shostakovich's political dissidence will think that they have found it when they read the many letters to Glikman that express the composer's resentment at his mistreatment, or that skillfully parody Soviet officialese, or that poke guarded fun at the "cult of the personality." The one that most moved me was a letter in which Shostakovich quietly but staunchly expressed his wonder at the quality of one of his compositions (Glikman speculates that it was the Eighth Symphony, banned by the Zhdanovshchina), and his joy in being its author. What makes the letter moving is not its content but its date, December 21, 1949—Stalin's seventieth birthday, manically celebrated throughout the Soviet Union in a manner unforgettably satirized by Solzhenitsyn in *The First Circle*. Strangely enough, Glikman, elsewhere so keen to point out the most trivial and transparent ironies, failed to notice this one. Shostakovich may have overestimated his friend's perspicacity.

But none of this is dissidence. It is, rather, the old "fig in the pocket," the self-consoling recourse of the disaffected. Another example was Shostakovich's incorporation of a greatly distorted and disguised version of "Suliko," a Georgian popular tune known to be Stalin's favorite, in his First Cello Concerto. He asked Rostropovich one day whether he had noticed. Rostropovich had not. Shostakovich's pocket could be rather deep. A dissident did not use pockets. It is the open fig that marks—no, makes—the dissident.

SHOSTAKOVICH'S HOLY HUMAN hatred of his oppressors was vehement and profound. It is hilariously expressed in his "Antiformalist Peepshow," a cantata that ridiculed the Zhdanovshchina, which he wrote "for the drawer" (the composer's version of the pocket), possibly in 1948, and revised around 1968. Glikman shared his friend's love of paro-

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dies of this sort, and wrote a few himself (included in an appendix to the letters volume). But to jump from such expressions of disaffection to blunt anti-communism (or pro-Westernism), as so many reviewers of the Glikman letters have done, is a gross misstep. It amounts to equating a critic of, say, Joseph McCarthy with an enemy of America (or a friend of Russia)—that is to say, it amounts to adopting the viewpoint and the values of a Zhdanov or a McCarthy. And it casts the composer's many civic acts and duties—not only as a Party member but also as a deputy to the Supreme Soviet who met regularly with his "constituents," a Soviet representative to several international peace conferences, and the president of the Russian branch of the Union of Soviet Composers—not to mention his acceptance of as many official honors and medals as any Politburo member—as so much hypocrisy. It was by participating in the life of his society—the only society in which he had a chance to participate—rather than by holding himself above it in holy alienation that he achieved the unique public stature that so distinguished him both from the Party hacks at home and from his sadly marginalized Western counterparts.

In a large, comprehensive, fabulously informative, but as yet untranslated publication of documents from its own collection called *Dmitry Shostakovich in Letters and Documents*, the Glinka Museum of Musical Art in Moscow has provided hair-raising evidence that Shostakovich could play the Soviet political game as well as anybody, and that he used his newly powerful position as Party member and Union president (and, possibly, accepted it) with an eye toward payback. At the first Union meeting at which he presided, in February, 1960, Shostakovich delivered a blistering attack on the repertoire of the Pyatnitsky Choir, the Soviet Union's pre-eminent "fakelore" ensemble, and in particular on the work of its director, Marian Koval, a hack composer who had published during the Zhdanovshchina a slanderous trio of essays in *Sovetskaya muzyka*, the official organ of the all-Soviet Composers' Union, collectively titled "Shostakovich's Creative Path." To V.V. Khvatov, one of the choir's staff arrangers, Shostakovich wrote in his official capacity that Khvatov's arrangement of the folk dance "Kamarinskaya" "has nothing in common with the art of music," repeating practically verbatim the humiliating words uttered by Vladimir Zakharov, Koval's predecessor as the choir's director, about Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony from the very rostrum of the Central Committee in 1948. Sorry, Shostakovich was not a saint.

Perhaps the passage in Glikman's volume that will be the least palatable to those who need to see a heroic resister in Shostakovich will be the letter of March 21, 1955, in which he discusses with Glikman the revisions he wished to make to *Lady Macbeth* before submitting it for rehabilitation (something not achieved until December, 1962). The new version, retitled *Katerina Izmailova* and so extensively revised as to merit a new opus number, was significantly softened along lines consistent with the harsh criticism that the opera had received in "Muddle Instead of Music." Some of the most blatant "pornophony" (to use the pretty term coined in 1935 by the reviewer for the *New York Sun*) was removed from the score, and the text was bowdlerized. The letter leaves no doubt that at least the textual softening was voluntary, motivated by civil consideration, altogether at variance with the composer's younger self, for the sensibilities of the audience.

Performing the opera in the form that was banned in 1936 has become the standard practice in the West (often incorporating the revised and expanded version of the final scene, which depicts a convoy en route to Siberia), and it is usually thought of as an act of solidarity with the composer against the prudery of the totalitarian state. But in fact Shostakovich disagreed, and even moved to suppress the opera in its original form once the new version was ready. Today's producers and audiences have every right to prefer what they prefer, but they cannot claim to be vindicating the composer's intentions, and still less can they claim a moral justification for indulging a profitable taste for pornophony. The composer of *Katerina Izmailova*, the subject of Glikman's book, was evidently a far different composer from that of *Lady Macbeth*.

VI.

It is the great merit of the Glinka Museum anthology that it finally gives that younger composer a voice. Roughly half of its nearly six hundred pages contain material from the mid- to late 1920s, the period of his first fame. The voice of Shostakovich in those days was that of a young Siegfried, a cocky voice and a happy voice despite periods of real material privation. (In one letter he apologizes for a late reply by explaining that in the past couple of weeks he did not have enough money to buy a seven-kopeck stamp.) It is the voice of a young man reveling in his strength and, above all, the voice of one who has not yet learned to live in fear. At the same time it is the voice of a pampered mama's boy (drolly accompanied at times by Mama herself, writing to some of her son's eminent correspondents to make sure that Mitya was drinking his kefir and wearing his jacket) and of an inveterate joker. It is much assisted in its present reincarnation by the editors' factual annotations, and it is only occasionally saddled with their interpretive intrusions. While one can never be sure, one is given no reason a priori to suspect bowdlerization of the texts one is reading. In a fashion unapproached by any previous Russian publication concerning Shostakovich, readers are invited to lower their well-exercised strategic defenses and indulge the illusion that they are for once seeing Shelley plain, even if it is a Shelley who loved to pose and prevaricate. To say as much brings all the defenses rushing back, of course, and that is only as it should be. But I take pleasure in quoting some plums.

"The trrrragic style makes me laugh out loud," writes Mitya in 1927 in one of the sixty-six letters collected here addressed to Boleslav Yavorsky (1877–1942), one of the great *éminences grises* in the history of Russian and Soviet music. Trained as a mathematician, Yavorsky was a minor pianist and composer and a dazzlingly original music theorist who published little but had an enormous influence on his many pupils, as well as on those who, like the young Shostakovich, sought him out as a mentor. I would be failing in my duty to the new musicology not to report as well that Yavorsky lived openly with a male lover, his former pupil Sergey Protapopov (1893–1954), with whom Shostakovich was also close, and that there has been a fair amount of post-Soviet speculation on the nature of Yavorsky's relationship with his protégé the golden boy of early Soviet music.

Considering Shostakovich's current reputation as the twentieth century's prime musical tragedian, the flip remark to Yavorsky is arresting, and it has many echoes. A few months after writing the letter that contains it, Shostakovich submitted to a mammoth interview-cum-questionnaire administered by the music historian Roman Gruber as part of a research project on "the psychology of the creative process." As to the stated subject, Shostakovich reported that "when composing I always suffer from insomnia; I smoke even more than usual; I take long walks, which helps me mull things over; I pace around the room, write standing, can't stay put in one place."

But the interview covered much more than that. Asked about his tastes in the other arts, Shostakovich replied that he had no interest or response at all to painting ("I am repelled mainly by its static quality") or to poetry—but that if he had to name a couple of poets he liked "relatively," he would name Derzhavin and

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Mayakovsky. This is a great joke. Gavrila Derzhavin (1743–1816), a neo-classical panegyrist and the official "great poet" of the age of Pushkin, was the gold standard of empty orotundity. So, by implication, was the stentorian Mayakovsky, soon to be officially proclaimed the Soviet poet laureate. (Shostakovich's own collaboration with Mayakovsky on *The Bedbug* was still more than a year away.) Asked about his taste in composers, Shostakovich went after the foghorns (Bruckner, Scriabin) and the long faces (Medtner, Myaskovsky)—"hedgehog" composers who purveyed univocal messages. His list of favorites is a gallery of foxes: Mahler, Richard Strauss, Berg, Mussorgsky, Stravinsky, Prokofiev.

Two letters to Yavorsky from December, 1926, already summarized and commented on in Fay's excellent biography, contain priceless descriptions of the Conservatory exam in "Marxist methodology" that twenty-year-old Mitya almost failed, with potentially serious consequences for his career. He and another student laughed boisterously when a third was asked to explain the difference between Chopin's music and Liszt's in sociological and economic terms. Having thus attracted unfavorable notice from the examiner, Shostakovich was asked which of the required books he had read. After arrogantly answering that he had read none of them, he was ejected from the room. (He petitioned for a re-exam and easily passed it.) Fay comments that in retrospect Shostakovich's behavior "seems an ominous prescription for early martyrdom." But what is striking is that Shostakovich (naïvely, in Fay's judgment) was not at all chastened by the experience, and recounted it to Yavorsky with undisguised merriment in a letter sent through the mail.

WAS THIS POLITICAL (or "apolitical") naïveté? Does it give evidence of actual or future political dissidence? Or was it just young Siegfried's high spirits and irreverence, expressed during the relatively low-pressure years of the New Economic Policy, when he was not just a bright student but an already famous composer counting on the protection of his burgeoning reputation, and all within what he took to be a closed and cosseted circle of friends and teachers? The Conservatory students with whom I lived in Moscow during the Brezhnevite stagnation had a similar attitude toward their "historical materialism" courses and the teachers who staffed them. By then, of course, they would have behaved more circumspectly than Shostakovich did, and would not have written letters about it; but their attitude implied no political opinion, and neither did his. It is well summed up by a lovely quip in one of the letters to Yavorsky, where before writing "Marxist methodology" Shostakovich wrote "God's Law" (*Zakon Bozhiy*) and crossed it out, recalling the equivalent pre-revolutionary course requirement, which students had treated with comparable respect.

In any case, no political qualms prevented Shostakovich from eagerly accepting the honor of a commission from the Musical Sector of the Soviet government's publishing arm for the Second Symphony ("To October"), or from working on it with great enthusiasm, as we may now read in a whole sheaf of letters to the functionary who was responsible for the commission, one Lev Shulgin, a respectable pianist who had trained as a composer with some of the same teachers who taught Shostakovich. The work was to be a showpiece of Soviet "industrial" modernism. Shostakovich's twenty-minute single movement replays in highly compressed form the dramaturgy of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, beginning with indistinct rumblings and ending with a choral paean to "October! Herald of the Desired Dawn!" with words by the fittingly monikered Alexander Bezymensky (that is, "No-name"), one of the many sub-Mayakovskys of the period. It was Shulgin, it turns out, who came up with what is now the symphony's best-remembered idea, a factory whistle whose blast caps a bustling polytonal fugue to usher in the choral apotheosis.

Shostakovich, carried away with the task, sent Shulgin ebullient if inveterately leg-pulling reports of his progress. In one, he described early reactions to the piece:

> I showed it to a few musicians. They approve. But that is unimportant. What is important is that a few days ago I played it over to a few acquaintances, among whom were four workers from a metallurgical plant and one peasant who had come in from the far countryside. They got less out of the instrumental part, but went into ecstasies over the chorus and, although they could not read the music, tried to sing along. That filled me with joy.

In later life, Shostakovich repudiated both the Second Symphony and the Third Symphony (1929), dedicated to the First of May. The reason was their immature modernism, as he came to judge it, rather than their overt political content (which, after all, was no different from that of the Eleventh or Twelfth Symphonies). But Roman Gruber's interview notes give startling evidence of what the Second Symphony meant to Shostakovich at the time.

He complained that upon finishing his conservatory studies, he felt unable to compose. Only by "squeezing them out of myself" was he able to write such early pieces as the famous First Symphony, the *Two Pieces for String Octet*, and so on. Later, he reported, he went utterly dry for a while, his "creative imagination being unable to get past the boundaries set by classroom rules." This situation persisted until the autumn of 1926, when "I turned to the study of contemporary Western European composers (Schoenberg, Béla Bartók, Hindemith, Krenek), which apparently provided the stimulus I needed to 'emancipate' my creative imagination; the first works of this new period were written in a great burst: the [first] piano sonata, the *Aphorisms* for piano, the Symphonic Poem for the Tenth Anniversary of the October Revolution (Second Symphony) and the first act of *The Nose*."

These are indeed inspired works, every one. Having heard a magnificent performance of the Second Symphony last year by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra under Alexander Lazarev, I can attest to its stunning effect. An ex-Soviet musicologist seated next to me, an embittered refugee from the tyrannical state that her homeland had become, was almost in tears at its conclusion. It reminded her, she said, of the idealism and the unfeigned revolutionary ardor of her parents' generation, as yet unclouded by the tragedies to come. It gave her (and even me, who knew that idealism and ardor only at a scholarly remove) a poignant case of the might-have-beens.

THE TRAGEDIES THAT came were what made a tragedian of Shostakovich. They were already looming on the horizon in 1931, when, appalled by the rise of the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM)—which had lobbied against him (and ended the run of *The Nose*), taken over the conservatories, and threatened to reduce Soviet music to a rubble of marches and mass songs—he published "Declaration of a Composer's Obligations" (reprinted in the Glinka Museum anthology), in which he repudiated the *lyogkiy zhanr* as inartistic, singling out for special excoriation his own theatrical and music-hall scores, especially the most recent one, the "bad and shameful" one called "Declared Dead" (*Uslovno ubitiy*, 1931). Ironically enough, this is the very score that, reconstructed from sketches and orchestrated by Gerard McBurney, has been lately performed and recorded (under the title "Hypothetically Murdered") to wide acclaim.

After RAPM was dissolved in 1932 in accordance with the decree that created the Union of Soviet Composers, Shosta-

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kovich made a characteristic comment: "All I hope is that if RAPM couldn't manage to grind me to a powder, neither will the Union." He wrote this to his close friend Levon Atovmyan (1901–1973), a minor composer and a career bureaucrat who held various administrative posts within the cultural establishment, eventually (after a two-year stint in the gulag) rising to the directorship of the Muzfond, the Union office that managed commissions and disbursements. The two-hundred-odd short letters and telegrams from Shostakovich to Atovmyan in the Glinka Museum collection are an at times surreal chronicle of musical life during the most stringent phase of Soviet history.

One of the few correspondents with whom he was on familiar second-person terms, Atovmyan was one of the very few whom the post-1936 Shostakovich could trust with irony. In a letter addressed to Atovmyan in his capacity as administrator in charge of commissions, dated January 15, 1940, while Shostakovich was at work on his orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, he wrote: "Unfortunately, I fear that I will not be able to write a Triumphal Overture just now, since I am very busy with *Boris*. Besides, I do not feel it in my power to create a portrait of Comrade Molotov in music, since such a complex task would require enormous labor, mastery, and, above all, time."

Among the weirder commissions that Atovmyan successfully brokered for Shostakovich was a series of snappy numbers for the NKVD's own Song and Dance Ensemble, composed between 1942 and 1946. The notion of a hall full of secret police operatives—perhaps including those who interrogated Shostakovich's imprisoned brother-in-law; or the imprisoned composer Alexander Mosolov (whose ballet suite *Steel*, including the famous "Foundry" movement, shared the program with the Second Symphony's premiere); or Atovmyan; or even (if a story spread by his friend Venyamin Basner is true) Shostakovich himself—being regaled by a stage full of dancers and prancers all kicking up their heels to the strains of Shostakovich's "Victorious Spring" ... well, that is a scene worthy of Bulgakov. How's that for a creative response to just criticism?

I cannot keep from chuckling at the thought, but finally its inevitable doubleness disquiets and shames. By the 1940s there was no innocent humor in the Soviet Union, and one can only shudder at the pressures that Shostakovich must have faced—pressures that we cannot comprehend or truly empathize with now, no matter how many books we read. In the end the relentless opportunistic speculation over Shostakovich's legacy, the dueling exegeses, the triumphant claims and counter-claims, the charges and counter-charges, amount to little more than political prurience. A quarter-century past the end of his tormented life, we are still tormenting his ghost, appropriating his authority, seeking his support to bolster new party lines.

So let us give him the last word. One of the newly published letters, sent on June 24, 1959 to Yury Keldysh, the editor of *Sovetskaya muzyka*, protests the airing in that publication of a nasty memoir by Sol Hurok about Alexander Glazunov, one of Shostakovich's revered early mentors. "We all know that F. Schubert died of syphilis," he wrote. "But that doesn't mean we need to print scholarly articles about it. Mussorgsky died of drink. About this there is also no need to write articles and studies, just as there is no need to keep reprinting that insulting portrait of Mussorgsky by Repin. It seems to me that this principle is clear enough."

I may not exactly agree with this "principle." (What scholar would?) But the miseries of people's lives ought not to be exploited *ad libitum* in the furtherance of our profits or our careers, and in the vain conviction that we understand everything. By turning Shostakovich into a saint, a hero, or a martyr to gratify our hatred of the evil that surrounded him, we grant him no posthumous victory. All we do is reduce him to the level of our imperfect comprehension and our biases. Better to let the contradictions stand. They are what have made Shostakovich so consequential. ■

To Feel and Feel Not

By SIMON BLACKBURN

Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions by Martha C. Nussbaum

(Cambridge University Press, 760 pp., $39.95)

IN MY FAR-OFF happy school days, there was always one thing, above all, of which you had not to stand guilty. This was lack of moral fiber. Intelligence and learning were fine, but moral fiber was an essential. It produced regular, strenuous boys ready to meet the kinds of ideals celebrated by our school poet, Sir Henry Newbolt. When the Gatling's jammed and the colonel's dead, and the sands of the desert are sodden red, the voice of the schoolboy would be heard, calling on everyone to play up, play up, and play the game, so very like Tony Blair and George W. Bush do today, albeit at a distance from the sodden desert. If you had moral fiber (or what later became known in America as "the right stuff"), you deserved to be a leader of men—and of women, of course. Words such as "hegemony" had not been discovered, so instead we were being educated for leadership, the best kind of leadership, setting an example of lives infused by knowledge of the right and the good.

Which brings me to Martha C. Nussbaum, whom I have long admired for having generous quantities of moral fiber. She is among America's most prolific and prominent public intellectuals, with many causes to her credit, to all of which she brings extraordinary scholarly and liberal credentials. She has worked extensively on education, on development in the Third World, on law, on homosexuality, and above all on the injustices of gender. She is serious and concerned, and as readers of this magazine should remember, she is a dedicated opponent of all that is glitzy and trashy in modern culture. She brings to her causes a vast knowledge of the ancient world and philosophy and literature, along with a relentless sense of injustice and of the man-made obstacles to human dignity and human achievement (among which she is not afraid to number other philosophers). She seeks to exemplify the power of reason in the practical world. Such leadership requires energy, and she is energetic beyond measure: the present book weighs in at more than seven hundred fifty pages, and in it she refers to nine other books of her own, several edited collections, and a forest of papers, and there must be many others she hides under the bushel. If anyone can steady the

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ranks, surely Nussbaum can.

In my young days, a fellow with moral fiber had to avoid the emotions. Emotion was for sissies. A little moist fervor might be allowed when the school orchestra cranked the national anthem up to speed, but generally emotion was a furtive business, best concealed. Life was to be lived dry of eye and stiff of lip. More or less unconsciously, but following a dominant tradition of Western thought, people held that emotions were disruptive and irrational, dangerous interferences with the smooth operation of reason and deliberation. But such a negative assessment is very much on the retreat in philosophy and psychology now, and Nussbaum's book is one of many celebrations of that retreat. "Emotional intelligence" has become a catchphrase, quite apart from its association with the soggier parts of the therapy industry.

THERE ARE THREE major tributaries contributing to this stream of thought. Two of them originate in popular science. In the tradition of William James, there is work from neurophysiology, most famously announced in Antonio Damasio's best-selling book *Descartes's Error*, which appeared in 1994. It showed how totally dependent we are on the limbic system, or evolutionarily primitive parts of the brain responsible for arousal and emotion. Damasio presented patients, of whom the best known is an unfortunate nineteenth-century railway man named Phineas Gage, who had an iron rod shoot through one eye and his forebrain. Such patients can have memory, verbal ability, perceptual ability, inferential capacity, and moral reasoning all perfectly intact, but their capacity for living any kind of sensible life vanishes. The reason seems to be that there is no longer any stable way in which their representations of possible states of affairs and actions bring about "affect" or emotional arousal. Without that association, the decision-making landscape goes entirely flat, and deliberation becomes impossible. So we should be grateful for our mechanisms of emotional arousal. Without them we would be not paradigms of rational action, such as the emotionless Dr. Spock in *Star Trek*, but hopeless flotsam incapable of rational agency.

A second scientific tributary in the new study of the emotions has been work from evolutionary psychology, suggesting an adaptive role for many states of emotional arousal, including even those that tend to get a negative press from moralists. Basic emotions prime us for flight, or feeding, or mating, while more complex emotions act as essential social signals of hostility or cooperation. Even emotions that we do not much esteem, such as jealousy and fear, perform this kind of function, according to the Darwinians; and what such emotions sometimes lose in discrimination they gain in speed. It may be better to panic and run than to pause to make sure that what startled you really is dangerous.

And a third influence upon the recent hospitality to the subject of the emotions is the recent rediscovery of eighteenth-century wisdom. In writers such as David Hume, and even more notably Adam Smith, we find a "sentimental" tradition of great insight and richness, but one that totally subverts any alleged distinction between acting from emotion and acting from reason. Even when we act from cool and calculated self-advantage, our conception of where that advantage lies is shaped and sustained by our "passions": sometimes passions of vanity, or of fear, or of how we stand in the eyes of others; sometimes deposits from memories of shameful failures or elating successes. This tradition provides a far richer account of motivation than does classical rational choice theory, whose "economic man" is too often a horrible caricature of actual human agency.

NUSSBAUM ATTENDS TO these currents of thought, but her defense of the emotions comes from a very different direction, so much so that it is not even clear that the emotions are what she is defending. She is grateful, rather, for our ability to make certain kinds of judgments, and emotions are identified with those judgments. In her introduction, Nussbaum explains what she takes an emotion to be. Apparently following the Stoics, she holds that "emotions are appraisals or value judgments, which ascribe to things and persons outside the person's own control great importance for that person's own flourishing."

This is the core of what Nussbaum calls a "cognitive/evaluative" view of the emotions, which might better be called a cognitive/evaluative/egocentric view. Cognitive, because emotions are ways of representing the world, or seeing things in one way or another. Evaluative, because in emotion things are seen as good or bad. Egocentric, because it is the subject herself for whom they are good or bad. Emotions, in such a conception of them, are judgments about our own flourishing, or what the ancients called *eudaimonia*.

Of course, it is not difficult to defend emotions when they are so defined, since it is obviously a good thing that we can make judgments of this sort. Nor is it difficult to prosecute Nussbaum's main agenda, which is to show that the emotions are important to ethics. For if emotions are value judgments, then it goes without saying that they are important to ethics, since value judgments are the substance of ethics. We should notice also that even the Stoics would have had no quarrel with the ability to make this kind of judgment. The Stoic's light laugh at the foot of the gallows co-exists with his recognizing the imminent loss of his flourishing. It is just that he accords that flourishing the importance that it deserves in the scheme of things, which is next to nothing. What the Stoics rejected was getting worked up about things, including one's own flourishing.

Once we get this far, questions crowd in. At first sight, an upheaval of thought is no more a thought than the upset of an apple cart is an apple cart. If I report that today's meeting on environmental policy was too emotional to get anywhere, do I really mean only that people were appraising things outside their own control as having great importance for them? That is probably what the meeting was supposed to be doing, after all. But where in such a description are the high feelings, the red faces and clenched fists, the raised voices and pounding pulses, that derailed the discussion? And what about the things that are outside one's control? If I feel compassion for the bleeding child in front of me, am I taking her injury to be beyond my control, even while I set about tending to it? Most pointedly, perhaps, is it really true that my own flourishing is always so dear to me? If my heart goes out to the people who died at the World Trade Center, am I just ascribing to their agony a great negative importance for my own flourishing? Does the self intrude so centrally, even as the sense of horror wells up?

At first sight, Nussbaum's proposal looks to be a typical example of a philosopher shoehorning things of one category into another category, and therefore of little interest. Yet the rest of her book is devoted to countering such objections, and to developing the original formula into something rounder and richer, which she calls a neo-Stoic view. This might sound like a dry, and an uphill, agenda. In old-fashioned analytical writings, counter-examples such as the ones that I have just sketched would quickly come along, the view would be tweaked a little, and more counter-examples would then be posed to the tweaked view, until a

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battered final version would lurch toward the finishing line, with bandages all over it testifying to the obstacles that it had met on the road.

THIS IS NOT Nussbaum's way. She uses a wide-angle lens. Instead of concentrating upon the details of the account, she takes us on a synoptic tour of different emotional landscapes. We are told much about her grief at the death of her mother, and the emotions of one of her mentor's dogs, and infantile omnipotence and need, and ambivalence and tragedy and compassion in public life, and emotion and music, and then, in a kind of book within the book, about the ladders of love in the Christian and Platonic tradition. In these latter three hundred pages, Nussbaum coyly casts herself as Virgil in the *Divine Comedy*, and imagines herself conducting a pupil, Proust's Albertine, on a sentimental education. Leaving behind her beach and bicycle and unsatisfactory grapplings with Marcel, Albertine is introduced to the usual climbing guides: Diotima, Augustine, Spinoza, Dante. Predictably, Albertine is taught that her love for Marcel is selfish and passive, but that by becoming a lover of the good and the beautiful she can escape from her bondage, transcend her finitude, and ascend to a "love that is purified of the obstacles that stand between it and a beneficent concern for all humanity."

The plot of ascent and triumph and redemption is intoxicating enough, but Nussbaum soon regains her poise. Indeed, having lugged Albertine safely to the top, she goes on to commend various Romantic criticisms of the Christian ascent: Emily Brontë, Mahler, Whitman, and Joyce. Illustrating a rather sunny tendency to think that the well-tuned individual can have it all, personal attachments and projects alongside universal love, Nussbaum concludes by endorsing a "tender mockery" of Albertine's education, quoting the marvelous send-up from Joyce:

> And there came a voice out of heaven, calling: *Elijah! Elijah!* And he answered with a main cry: *Abba! Adonai!* And they beheld Him even Him, ben Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to the glory of the brightness at an angle of forty-five degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street like a shot off a shovel.

After this I felt rather sorry for Albertine, left behind on her pinnacle, beaming compassion in all directions. Still, I suppose almost anything would be an improvement on Marcel.

An austere critic might think Nussbaum's volume to be a big kettle of very different fish: not quite confessional, not quite empirical psychology, not quite psychoanalysis, not quite political theory, not quite music criticism or literary criticism, not quite theology, and not quite philosophy. A more generous appraisal would say that it is all of these, each casting light on the rest. The different exercises are designed as case studies for the cognitive/evaluative/egocentric view, showing not only that it is far from the dry-eyed, stiff-upper-lipped account that it might seem to be, but that it alone accounts for the teeming diversity and complexity of emotional life.

The view that emotions are not simply sensations, but involve representations of situations, is orthodox in philosophy. I fear the dog because I see it as dangerous; I am angry because I took your gesture as insulting. If I learn that the dog is not dangerous, or that the gesture is a polite greeting in your part of the world, the emotions ought to evaporate, though often they do not. Emotions are directed; or, in the philosophical jargon, they have intentionality. A feeling with no object, a diffuse feeling of anxiety or joy, is often counted not as an emotion but as a mood, although there is an element of legislation in that. This intentionality is universally acknowledged, but few philosophers, and fewer psychologists, have been drawn to a purely cognitive account of emotion. It seems obvious that emotions involve not only thoughts about situations but also feelings toward them. When the emotional temperature rises, and feelings run high, it is not that a lot of thinking or appraising is going on. Emotions are often manifested by disruptions of thought and appraisal.

Nussbaum knows this, of course. She takes it into account mainly by introducing a developmental dimension into her account. In her view, when our emotions seem to overwhelm us and to get in the way of calm appraisal, it is because "the past wells up in us, in ways that surprise the deliberately intending self." The present object is associated with some past object of great importance, ultimately traced back to childhood experiences of shame or love or need. So although I may calmly assess a situation as safe and friendly, my developmental history may tell me otherwise: cues of which I may not even be aware can prompt fear or anxiety. This developmental dimension accounts for our feeling of helplessness in the face of many emotions. It also allows Nussbaum a generous sympathy with humanity's difficulties: we cannot change our emotional natures without long, patient, and careful work, whose eventual success may always be in doubt. Unlike many classically inspired moral philosophers, she rejects not only the Stoics, but even Aristotle himself, as "excessively violent toward human complexity and frailty."

All this is important and well said, although I doubt whether it fits quite as well with the purely cognitive account as it is supposed to do. For it is metaphorical to say that the past wells up in us. What wells up are fear, anxiety, grief, joy, anger, and love. No doubt, like everything else, they do so because of some combination of nature and nurture. But when they do well up, it does not seem as if one judgment that I make is simply coming into conflict with a different judgment that I make. Such a description makes it sound as though we have only an inconsistency of thoughts, not an inconsistency of feelings. And clashes of thought can be as calm as we like: we assess the evidence one way, and assess the evidence the other way, and suspend judgment, or opt for one conclusion. Such episodes may be quite unemotional.

NUSSBAUM WRITES AS if there were only one kind of rival to the cognitive account: a view that simply adds sensations or bodily feelings onto the cognitive appraisal. In such a view, a rush of jealousy might not be just an appraisal of a threat to oneself from the direction of one's partner's attention. It would be that appraisal together with a pounding in the head, or a sweaty sensation, or a clenching in the stomach. Nussbaum has little trouble dismissing such suggestions. While such sensations may indeed accompany an episode of jealousy, they are surely optional, and play no role in defining the emotion. Similarly, the jealousy may be expressed in any of a variety of ways, depending on peculiarities of personal or cultural history. It may not get expressed at all.

Should we conclude, then, that there is nothing to the jealousy but the appraisal? Surely not: after all, one might notice the threat to one's relationship but respond to it resignedly or amusedly, ruefully or excitedly. To be jealous involves taking it in a particular way: as painful, hurtful, unbearable, tormenting. These words describe how one feels about the threat. They do not confine their contribution to the fact that one has noticed the threat. Similarly, if I am flushed with pride about my achievement, then it is not just that I think I have done rather well. It is also that I take pleasure in having done so, and want my achievement to be noticed, and feel inclined to bask a little, and so on. All these descriptions register my feelings toward things.

Nussbaum is severe toward what she calls non-cognitive theories. In her view, they are condemned to thinking of

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feelings as something like twinges or jabs: episodes that she often calls unintelligent, impulsive, and thoughtless. By contrast, the neo-Stoic theory makes emotions intelligent, susceptible of justification, and even—since they are nothing but judgments—true or false. That latter characteristic should give us pause. This is a disappointingly cavalier way of drawing up the options, especially from someone who has studied eighteenth-century moral philosophy.

For feelings are not like twinges. A rush of feeling is an episode in which attitudes and stances manifest themselves. Feelings in turn are not always impulsive, they do not always display themselves in consciousness, and they are by no means thoughtless: they respond with limitless sensitivity to our perceptions, memories, and imaginings. Moreover, recognizing the dimension of feeling in no way undermines Nussbaum's moral agenda, which is to see the emotions as permeable to reason and criticism, and hence to education and development. The directions of our feelings, as well as their intensity, their expression, and their duration, are all more or less responsive to discursive pressure. As we all know, it is good when people feel the generous emotions, and worse when they feel the destructive ones.

The cognitive view needs more than an equation between feelings toward things on the one hand, and judgments of value on the other. It also requires that the judgments of value are themselves pure cognitions, representing aspects of the world. And this is highly dubious, since a judgment of value is itself an expression of attitudes, stances, and feelings toward things. So even if my horror at the World Trade Center atrocity is equated with the judgment that it was a wholly bad thing, the next question that we have to ask is which way that equation is to be taken. Nussbaum wants it to make the emotion cognitive; others (such as myself) would read it as making the apparent cognition really emotional. It is an old battle, but unfortunately it is not joined in Nussbaum's book.

THE FINAL ELEMENT of the neo-Stoic view is the egocentricity. So we must ask: is the self always in the center of the picture? The emotion of compassion is the obvious counter-example, where it is your flourishing, rather than my own, that is the object of my attention and feeling. Or, if we are cynical about the selflessness of love, we can consider Joseph Butler's eighteenth-century example of the man who runs upon certain ruin in order to revenge himself on an enemy. Here his own flourishing is very far from his mind. Indeed, for one in the grip of the passion for vengeance, the flourishing of the self gets entirely neglected.

Faced with such examples, Nussbaum complicates her view into something quite hard to grasp. Early in her book she considers the obvious problem that animal emotion seems to be over-described by her neo-Stoic formula. For although most of us think that animals have emotions, few of us are prepared to see them as self-conscious, and hence capable of assessing things as good or bad for their own flourishing. They just go ahead and feel, we might say, without any such critical self-consciousness entering into the picture. Nussbaum certainly wants to provide a place for animal emotion. In some of her discussion she says that animals can attain the complex thoughts, including thoughts about themselves, that she describes. Talking of two dogs, she says:

> They showed a dejection when the men were temporarily absent, and a boisterous joy when they returned home, that showed that they had put these two men into their lives in a much more than instrumental way—still eudaimonistic, in the sense that the men were central to their scheme of goals and projects, but not simply survival-linked in the way of many of the eudaimonistic emotions of animals.

I have no difficulty with the boisterous joy that dogs can show, but I do have a lot of trouble with the dewy-eyed belief in "their scheme of goals and projects," and I certainly do not know how that scheme could be described as eudaimonistic unless the animals were thinking in terms of their own flourishing, a feat that is surely beyond them. Of course, dogs, like many lesser life forms, act in accordance with their own needs, but that is a far cry from having goals and projects conceptualized in terms of meeting those needs. A sunflower turns toward the light that it needs, but it has no goals or projects. Samuel Butler said that even a potato in a dark cellar had a kind of low cunning that stands it in excellent stead, but he was joking.

In other places Nussbaum simply admits that a creature can have emotion without reflexive self-consciousness. But she nowhere explains how you can appraise something as good or bad for your own flourishing without such self-consciousness, so that at such points it is easy to suspect that he neo-Stoic view is a hindrance that is best forgotten. Indeed, although Nussbaum is far too subtle to fall directly for the old fallacy of inferring that an emotion has the self as its object just because it is an emotion owned by a self, there is a distinct whiff of a parallel fallacy in the offing. This is to infer that because our emotional repertoire is formed from infantile self-monitoring, as the needs of the self are met or frustrated, we can never get beyond such concern. Nussbaum certainly does not believe this officially, but it is hard not to feel that it structures the egocentric element in her account.

A RECENT PROFILE of Nussbaum in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* paid full tribute to the qualities that I have already praised. It also said that she often seems alarmingly collected, and it strikes me that there is something cold about the neo-Stoic view of the emotions. It reminds me of a performance of Euripides that I once witnessed at a distinguished women's college. A line of coiffed and gowned young maidens stood stock still and elegantly raised their hands first to one side and then the other: "Here we come," they fluted in cut-glass accents, "in Bacchic frenzy."

Upheavals of Thought is aware that these young ladies are capable of tearing King Pentheus to pieces. It is aware of the shattering and the unbidden, the destructive and the transfiguring power of emotions in human life. I found myself reading it as a kind of apologia for much of the classical tradition of moral philosophy: an exercise in insisting that you can be a good deal of an Aristotelian or even a Stoic, but also human as well. For those with enough stamina, and enough moral fiber, it is a brave and civilized book. And at a time when we need above all an understanding of political emotions, its subject could not be more welcome. ■

Pain Thinks of the Hand

without soil without light without
thumb or ash without food Pain thinks
of the hand without weight without
blossom or snow without Psalm Pain
thinks of blossom & Psalm without
day & night without translucence
Pain thinks of the hand without close
the pale cup the body's deluge

Laurie Lamon

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The Untrue Believer

By RONALD RADOSH

The Brother: The Untold Story of Atomic Spy David Greenglass and How He Sent His Sister, Ethel Rosenberg, to the Electric Chair by Sam Roberts

(Random House, 543 pp., $35)

WE HAVE KNOWN for many years now the essential truth about the conspiracy trial of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg. Only a small and dwindling group of remaining true believers still argue that the couple were indicted and convicted for their political opposition to the Cold War policies of the Truman administration. Even the architects of the most well-known conspiracy theory, the one offered decades ago by the writers Walter and Miriam Schneir, reversed themselves in the pages of *The Nation*, after the first release of Venona papers in 1995, and conceded that Julius Rosenberg was a Soviet spy.

What remains to be explored are other questions raised by the trial of the Rosenbergs and their subsequent execution at Sing Sing prison in 1954. Especially intriguing is the Rosenberg family drama. The key witness against Julius and his wife Ethel was none other than Ethel's younger brother, David Greenglass. Sam Roberts spent sixteen years tracking down Greenglass, who lives now under a new name. Greenglass had granted an interview to Sol Stern and myself in 1978, but since then he had refused to speak to any other researchers. Roberts, who believed that Greenglass held the key to a proper understanding of the trial and the conviction, worked on Greenglass and urged him to tell his own story; and eventually financial considerations led Greenglass to accept Roberts's offer.

Greenglass agreed to cooperate with Roberts in exchange for a share of the royalties. Some critics have accused Roberts of "checkbook journalism," and have argued that this arrangement makes Greenglass's new testimony meaningless, since he supposedly would say anything that Roberts wanted him to say to get his share of the proceeds. I agree that paying for interviews is usually foolhardy, but Roberts told Greenglass that he would have no control over what Roberts would write, and that he would not even see the manuscript until publication. More importantly, Roberts has taken the trouble to corroborate any version of a story told by Greenglass, and to let the reader know when his subject's version conflicts with other testimony. For these reasons, I do not believe that Roberts's arrangement with Greenglass compromised his book.

For most people, the spectacle of a brother testifying against his sister, and thereby sending her to her death, is completely repugnant, and marks such an individual as a coward and a villain. And so Greenglass has been condemned by history, and by our popular culture: he has become synonymous with such a betrayal. But this makes it even more appropriate to have a book on the character and the background of Greenglass, even if it means yet another book on the Rosenbergs; still more appropriate to focus on what brought the younger brother to the point where he served as the government's main witness, whose testimony would ensure his sister's conviction.

At the trial in 1951, the defense tried hard to paint Greenglass as the kind of monster who would falsely testify against his kin to save his own neck. The Rosenbergs' counsel, Emanuel Bloch, told the jury that "any man who will testify against his own blood and flesh, his own sister, is repulsive, is revolting. He is the lowest of the lowest animals." This verdict about Greenglass, understandably, has stuck. Roberts recalls that Woody Allen had his own character in *Crimes and Misdemeanors* protest to his wife that despite his brother-in-law's vile behavior, "I love him like a brother," and then added: "David Greenglass." The name, Roberts observes, "remains a metaphor for misplaced loyalty and betrayal."

The provocative title of Roberts's book is a bit misleading: Greenglass did convict his sister, but he was not responsible for the death sentence that was put upon her; nor did he seek or desire such a terrible outcome. That unwarranted sentence was the work of Judge Irving Kaufman, who went to his death vociferously refusing to talk to anyone about what had led him to impose the harshest penalty possible. It has become a part of the historical consensus about the Rosenberg case that the death sentence for both man and wife was politically motivated, and not at all justified by the magnitude of the offense committed. They were spying, after all, for a wartime ally; and Klaus Fuchs, the atomic spy at Los Alamos, had been sentenced to a scant fifteen years by the British courts. The death sentence on Ethel, about whose role in the conspiracy the evidence was flimsy, aroused particular disdain. Even J. Edgar Hoover, who was not exactly soft on communism, wanted her life spared.

Moreover, martyrdom for the Rosenbergs was precisely what the international Communist movement wanted. The dead, after all, do not talk, and Moscow did not kindle to the possibility that its agents might one day become disillusioned and perhaps reveal what they knew. Writing to the court for mercy, Greenglass himself told the judge that "guilty they are, but the sentence is still one that puts a stain on the record of the United States. I know that if these people would tell their story they would be given a chance for life, but if they do not they will die." Greenglass added—accurately, as it turned out—that the death sentence "will be used as a motive for a new propaganda drive by the Soviet Government, charging the U.S. with 'brutality.'" He also warned that their deaths would only ensure that Julius Rosenberg's group of spies "will continue to operate without fear of detection."

The FBI, through its decoding of the then-secret Venona decrypts, already knew who the members of Julius Rosenberg's ring were. They included his friends and fellow City College alumni Joel Barr and Alfred Sarant, as well as the government aeronautics scientist William Perl, all of whom were providing the Soviets, through Rosenberg, with top-secret military data. These cables, Roberts wisely writes, "might have gone a long way toward persuading some people that the Rosenbergs were guilty of more than belonging to the Communist Party and that the highest levels of the Communist Party were aware of and even involved in Soviet espionage." But information gathered through Venona could not be introduced in a courtroom or used to prosecute any individual, since the Soviets would then learn that their code had been broken. Indeed, the government allowed the Los Alamos phy-

RONALD RADOSH is co-editor, with Mary R. Habeck and Grigory Sevostianov, of *Spain Betrayed: The Soviet Union in the Spanish Civil War* (Yale University Press).

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sicist Theodore Hall, whose information given to the Soviets on his own was on the level of the most advanced and sophisticated nuclear data, to leave the country for Great Britain when he failed to crack under FBI questioning, even though they knew from Venona of Hall's guilt.

That is why Ethel was indicted in the first place. Knowing that she was guilty only as an accessory to her husband's espionage, the government hoped that her indictment and her conviction would be the lever that would force Julius Rosenberg to talk, and thereby to provide the information that would allow the government to indict the members of the ring who were still at large. Without Venona being made public, the government could not produce what Roberts calls "sustainable guilty verdicts" that would be upheld on appeal, and also accepted in the court of public opinion.

ROBERTS DOES NOT offer any particularly new information about the case, though he does include some fresh material that adds to our comprehension of its overall dimensions. His accomplishment, instead, is to have opened a window on the character of the Rosenberg and Greenglass families. What led them to engage in espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union? Some have regarded David Greenglass as the villain of the family in this regard, but Roberts demonstrates that it was Julius Rosenberg who was the true believer, the hard-line (and naïve) Communist, who saw only good in Stalin and only bad in the United States. And such a conclusion is confirmed in other sources. In his recent memoir, the KGB spymaster Alexander Feklisov, a man who is still an unrepentant Communist, remembers Rosenberg fondly as an "anti-fascist activist" who took upon himself the task of giving the Soviet Union whatever military data his ring could acquire. Feklisov praises Rosenberg as an "unreconstructed idealist," simply another soldier (albeit one on the Soviet side) who "brought our common victory closer to becoming reality."

The picture that Roberts paints of Julius and Ethel is not a pretty one. They are shown to have been tough and unsympathetic ideologues, people so committed to the Soviet Union and to Stalin's vision of the future that they would willingly sacrifice their lives, and condemn their own children to orphanhood, for the sake of the cause. When Ethel's mother visited her in Sing Sing in 1953, she urged her daughter to think of her children. Ethel responded, according to David's wife Ruth, with this remark: "Don't mention the children. Children are born every day in the week." Julius told the FBI informant Jerome Tartakow that he was "satisfied that his children will be placed in a progressive foster home and will be well taken care of." As Roberts puts it, "the assumption was that the [Communist] party would take care of the kids."

Greenglass, by contrast, had been sucked into espionage by his brother-in-law, whom he admired and was trying hard to please. When the stark reality of what the arrests meant hit home, he was not prepared, as were Julius and Ethel, to orphan his own children. Indeed, he told Roberts that "my kids, my family, my home" were the only three things worth sacrificing his life for. The Rosenbergs, he added, were not "innocent martyrs. They were spies and could have cleared themselves."

INDEED, ROBERTS CONFIRMS the role played by Julius Rosenberg as that of a committed master spy, whose life was circumscribed by his self-appointed role as a provider and a recruiter for a Soviet network. Rosenberg began to work for the KGB in 1942, and, as Feklisov has written, he went beyond assigned tasks by acting on his own to steal the proximity fuse from a firm in which he was working. That fuse, a device used to blow up planes without directly hitting them, was later used by the Soviets to bring down Francis Gary Powers's U-2 spy plane during the Eisenhower administration. But Roberts reveals that Greenglass also went beyond what he was asked to provide in order to ingratiate himself with Rosenberg. For the first time, we learn that David Greenglass gave his brother-in-law not only primitive sketches of the implosion device, which he drew up from what he learned working at the Los Alamos machine shop, but later actually stole the detonator switch to be used on the atomic bomb.

The Soviets had asked Greenglass to gather material on people whom they might recruit, as well as samples of material used in the bomb. While on leave in New York in September, 1945, he gave Soviet agents a cartridge for the exploding-wire detonator that was invented by Luis Alvarez and made in the machine shop where Greenglass worked. Roberts cites a memo from an NKVD agent to Lavrenti Beria, head of the NKVD, describing the electronic detonator for the bomb along with a diagram "obtained through our agents." When asked about this by Roberts, Greenglass recalled only that he probably slipped it in his pocket and walked out the door.

There is a problem with the identification of the sources used by Roberts. His narrative has the feel of a thriller, which is probably what his publisher desired. There are hardly any footnotes accompanying the text. Those that exist, printed in the back, are extremely cursory, and are hardly meant to enable readers to decipher what sources exist for Roberts's statements. Throughout his book, he quotes from KGB material whose sources are not identified. Obviously some of them are from Venona, others from Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev's book *The Haunted Wood*, and still others from Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin's *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB*. But some of the KGB material that Roberts adduces is obviously not from any of these three sources, and the knowledgeable reader is left mystified as to Roberts's authority. Did he obtain his own previously unavailable files from a KGB source? If not, what is he citing? It is understandable that Roberts and his publisher would not want to alienate the general reader with an academic apparatus; but such a book is bound to raise controversial questions, and it is wrong to issue it without substantive documentation.

THE MOST INTERESTING parts of Roberts's book concern the culture of Los Alamos during the years of the Manhattan Project. One is immediately struck by the picture that he paints of the lax security at the laboratory. So many of the scientists and the soldiers working there were plainly on the political left, and so many of them were in fact pro-Soviet, that suspicion never fell upon someone such as Greenglass, who regularly advocated Marxism and openly praised the Soviet Union. Indeed, Greenglass frequently expounded to all who would listen the virtues of the Soviet motherland and communism. He was a loud-mouthed and rather unpleasant braggart who wrote home to his wife that he was working on his associates at Los Alamos, and would "have my company raise the Red flag yet."

His immediate supervisor told Roberts that Greenglass always "took the side of communism one hundred percent" and was "definitely pro-Russian." The irony, as Roberts writes, was that his co-workers never "put two and two together: his proselytizing on behalf of a largely Communist agenda and his insatiable curiosity" about the work being carried out, so as "to conclude that David Greenglass was systematically milking them for information on behalf of a foreign government." Few thought it likely that Greenglass, an outspoken Communist whom many at Los Alamos considered rather dim, could be a spy.

Still, Greenglass was not a true believer: for all his agreement with the Soviets and the Communists, he never joined the Party because it was too much to ask of him to

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get up early on weekends and deliver copies of *The Daily Worker*. And he was decidedly an amateur as a spy. Unlike his brother-in-law, whose life was framed by his career as a Soviet agent, Greenglass was a reluctant gatherer of data, a man who casually did what he was asked to do, and at the same time considered himself an American patriot doing his part for the war effort. (On the day of the test of the A-bomb at Los Alamos—the "Day of Trinity"—Greenglass slept through the test; after all, he told Roberts, he assumed that the bomb worked and so the test would be positive.) Speaking to Roberts decades later, he evinced no regret, no retrospective qualms, about having carried out espionage. He seems never to have given his deeds a second thought. Instead, like Theodore Hall, Greenglass expressed to Roberts a new post-hoc defense on behalf of spying for the Soviet Union: that by assisting the Soviet nuclear program he helped to maintain a balance of terror, and prevented nuclear war from breaking out, and contributed to the doctrine of mutually assured destruction.

Some critics have argued that Greenglass, who flunked his technical courses at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, would have been incapable, as a low-level machinist, of handing over anything of value to the Soviets. But in fact he was a good observer of what was taking place all around him. A skilled engineer gave him details about the bomb's trigger mechanism; and he also identified the precise amount of plutonium that was necessary to generate a critical mass. Contrary to the Rosenbergs' defenders, who have always argued that Greenglass's sketch of the bomb was primitive and useless, Roberts confirms what Joyce Milton and I argued in *The Rosenberg File* in 1983—that scientists contacted by the defense team to prove that Greenglass could not have produced any meaningful data for the Russians actually responded to the contrary.

Hans Bethe is quoted as saying, for example, that to make the drawings that were offered as evidence by the prosecution, "a person must have a good memory, preferably a visual one, and must have had close contact with the making of lens molds. Mr. Greenglass must therefore have been very familiar with their shape." Roberts produces a previously unknown letter from Albert Einstein to the left-wing journalist William Reuben, who was the first person to wage a campaign on the Rosenbergs' behalf. Einstein refused to give Reuben what he had requested, a statement that would have the world's most famous scientist arguing that Greenglass could not have transmitted atomic information. He replied to Reuben that it was "impossible for me to issue a statement concerning the Greenglass testimony," and he emphasized that he was not "sufficiently sure about it to be able to say that a person like Greenglass could not have prepared it on his own, without outside help."

THERE REMAINS, FINALLY, the question of the extent of Ethel Rosenberg's participation in her husband's network. What did she actually do to involve herself in espionage work, and how much did she know about her husband's activities? In *The Rosenberg File*, we argued that "Ethel, though convicted on tainted evidence, was almost certainly [Julius's] accomplice." The Venona release of 1995 confirmed our judgment. It provided evidence from the decrypted KGB messages that revealed that it was Ethel who had recommended that the KGB recruit her sister-in-law Ruth Greenglass. Another KGB message stated that Ethel was "sufficiently well developed politically" and "knows about her husband's work" as well as that of Joel Barr, though it mentioned that because of her health she "does not work" herself.

The government indicted both Rosenbergs as part of a "conspiracy," which did not mean that Ethel's lack of direct espionage work on her own could be sufficient to leave her out of any indictment. But Ruth, who by her own testimony was much more involved in the conspiracy than Ethel, was left out of any prosecution as part of a deal for David's cooperation—a deal that made Ethel's subsequent execution even more horrendous. One of the reasons the jury thought that Ethel was actually involved in espionage, though, was that David and Ruth Greenglass had testified that at one meeting in the Rosenbergs' New York apartment, Ethel had typed up David's handwritten notes for submission to the Soviets. In fact, David had consistently left his sister out of accounts of espionage until a scant ten days before the trial, after which he confirmed the story that Ruth had just told the FBI about Ethel doing the typing. At the trial, the prosecutor seized on this information in his summation to the jury, noting that Ethel had "struck the keys, blow by blow, against our own country in the interest of the Soviets."

Roberts questioned Greenglass about this discrepancy in their story, about the last-minute change in testimony. He quotes from an interview in 1978 in which Ruth Greenglass told Sol Stern and me that she was horrified at the implication that her story had sent Ethel to her death. Roberts notes that no one actually knows whether or not Ethel typed up any handwritten notes in September, 1945. Even if she did, he notes, the material contained little that was new. Greenglass did admit to Roberts, however, that although he corroborated his wife's story, he did not actually remember it himself then; nor does he now.

As for guilt, Greenglass seemed "oblivious to the implications of what he was saying," Roberts remarks, and stressed how much he had done to try to save Ethel's life. His recollections to Roberts come down to a reiteration of what Greenglass told Sol Stern and me as he left the office building where we interviewed him. Shrugging his shoulders, he said that it was either "his wife or his sister." To Roberts, Greenglass repeated that "my wife is more important to me than my sister. She was the mother of my children." As for his sister, he argues now that Ethel should have thought of her own children, too.

In his own assessment of the matter, Roberts is clear and certain. The evidence against Julius Rosenberg, he writes, "overwhelmingly" suggests that he was guilty of conspiracy to commit espionage. Although he did not steal "the" secret of the atom bomb, as many have argued, Roberts correctly notes that in a conspiracy indictment he could have been found guilty even if the goal was not accomplished. As it turned out, the proximity fuse "was probably more valuable to the Russian military" than any of the nuclear information that Rosenberg handed to the Soviets. As for Ethel Rosenberg, Roberts agrees that she was "irrefutably personally supportive, philosophically in sync, and morally complicit." He stresses that she may actually or may not have committed some of the criminal acts attributed to her by the prosecution, given the KGB's identification of her as a lookout. But it remains true that had David and Ruth not testified about her typing, it was more than likely that Ethel might not have been found guilty, and most certainly would not have been handed the death sentence by Judge Kaufman. That sentence, Roberts writes, "backfired politically and legally."

And what can one say, in the end, about Greenglass? He seems to have been a rather average GI—brash, opinionated, a man raised in the closed culture of Lower East Side Jewish-American communism, who was not smart enough to excel in his studies and by the luck of the draw was sent by the Army to work in the machine shop at Los Alamos as a replacement for someone who went AWOL. He was not willing to sacrifice himself and his family for Stalinism, and he put the truth ahead of his loyalty to his own sister and her husband. As he told Roberts, at least he is still here. Greenglass is right. The Rosenbergs "could have cleared themselves." All they had to do was tell the truth. It was their choice to persist instead in a lie, which they maintained until the very end. ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

All for One

AMARDEEP SINGH, A SLIGHT 30-year-old with a neat turban and large, dark eyes, is very, very angry about the Indian government's treatment of his fellow Sikhs in Punjab. Though his parents were both born in Northern India, he asks not to be called "Indian-American." He doesn't like references to "historical enmity" in the subcontinent, because for him those enmities are "very real and very present." He founded the Sikh Coalition, an organization that educates Americans about Sikhism. But Singh doesn't only consider himself a Sikh; he consciously labels himself "South Asian." In the United States, he says, "South Asians share common characteristics, culture, and interests."

SINGH'S DUAL COMMITMENTS ILLUSTRATE a strange post-September 11 paradox. While the war on terrorism has inflamed religious and national divisions on the subcontinent (so much so that the press paints apocalyptic scenarios of regional nuclear war), in the United States it has probably done more to unify America's disparate South Asian communities than any event since the mass migration that brought them to these shores in large numbers three decades ago. Since 9/11, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Nepalis, Sri Lankans, and Indians have felt the sting of hundreds of hate crimes and thousands of ugly comments. Describing this backlash, the media has increasingly used the label "South Asian," providing the term a legitimacy it hadn't enjoyed before. The concept of South Asianness "has taken off," says Madhulika Khandelwal, an Asian American Studies professor at the University of Massachusetts who studies Indian immigrants in the United States. Because, to American bigots, Pakistanis, Indians, Bangladeshis, Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs all look the same—brown—many victims are deciding they have a lot more in common than they had previously realized.

THE TERM "SOUTH ASIAN" HAS ALWAYS appealed to people in trouble. Among the first to embrace it were women battling domestic abuse. Purvi Shah, a board member for Sakhi, a Manhattan-based organization that gives emotional, educational, and legal support to South Asian women fighting domestic violence, calls the label "strategic": "We felt that, despite our national differences, there were cultural and historical similarities that we wanted to tap into in terms of combating violence." Taxi drivers in New York also rallied behind the South Asian banner early on: In May 1998, just after India and Pakistan tested their nuclear weapons, sending regional tensions through the roof, New York cab drivers held a major strike. The New York Taxi Workers Alliance—a major player in the strike—is at least 60 percent South Asian. "We organize across ethnicities in the industry, not at the expense of ethnic identities or differences," explains staff organizer Bhairavi Desai. "The larger base of solidarity is among issues of class, as taxi drivers."

THE LABEL *DESI*, OR SOUTH ASIAN, HAS also gained a foothold among the Indian-American second generation. The Indian immigrants who came to the United States in the mid-1960s tended to settle and socialize within their specific linguistic and regional groups. Their children are less inclined to segregate themselves. Debasish Mishra, 28, the child of immigrants from Orissa, works for SAALT, which only recently changed its name from Indian American Leadership Center to South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow. The "issues that affect the Indian-American community domestically are not so different from those affecting Pakistani- or Bangladeshi-Americans," Mishra explains. "So there was no point in being so parochial."

TO BE SURE, A HANDFUL OF VOCAL Hindus reject the South Asian moniker, challenging the supposed commonalities between Hindus and Muslims in the United States. Ramesh Rao, a professor at Truman State University in Missouri, tells me the "whole South Asian business is junk" and "some kind of P.C." thing. (He also says: "Saying Islam is a religion of peace is classic monotheistic marketing.") When Rajiv Malhotra, who runs the Infinity Foundation, an organization that gives grants to projects that focus on Indian identity, learned that I was writing on this topic, he sent an e-mail to his friends asking them to contact me. They called for days, leaving messages about how they are Indian first and South Asian never. "A lot of Hindus have suddenly started realizing they better stand up and differentiate themselves from Muslims or Arabs," said Malhotra, as though to do so would end the backlash.

BUT THE PEOPLE WHO CALLED AT MALhotra's behest were all first-generation. And while their assertion that "South Asian" stems from American victim politics may be largely true—it is also true that September 11 has made South Asians feel more victimized, more political, and more American than ever before. "The fact that I could be a target—that really brings people together, that shared vulnerability," says Khandelwal of UMass. "When I walk down the street ... [people] say, 'Here's another brown guy,'" argues Sreenath Sreenivasan, a professor at the Columbia School of Journalism. "In this country," he says, "you need to build coalitions."

THOSE COALITIONS ARE NOT WITHOUT costs. While embracing the term South Asian may give Americans of Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi descent greater influence over domestic politics, it will likely decrease their influence over foreign policy. Latino organizations generally avoid foreign policy, since their Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban members don't see eye to eye on questions like sanctions against Havana. Similarly, Asian American groups that include immigrants from Korea, Taiwan, and mainland China often find themselves divided—and therefore silent—on questions like arms sales to Taipei. The newly emerging South Asian organizations are equally constrained. "I think that we have to learn to separate India/Pakistan politics from Indian-American identity," explains Columbia's Sreenivasan. "What happens in Kashmir is the baggage we bring from the subcontinent." The website of the South Asian Journalists Association, which he co-founded, notes that the group does not "take stands on the politics of South Asia." Their agenda is here at home.

"SOUTH ASIAN," THEN, A TERM CRITICS deride as the product of political correctness, may in fact be a sign of accelerating assimilation (especially compared to the less P.C. but even more avid separatism of Hindu nationalists). "What you're seeing is not only a movement to stand up for our civil rights but also a movement to ensure that the larger society knows that we are Americans," says Kris Kolluri, an Indian immigrant and senior policy adviser to House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt. "Many of us [are] immigrants, but we profess our love to the United States as strongly or stronger than our love for where we came from." In this case, hyphenated identity ("South Asian-American") may be less a step away from unmodified Americanness than a step toward it. The bigots, who in patriotism's name have sought to make South Asian immigrants feel unwelcome, may have actually made them more American than ever before.

SARAH WILDMAN

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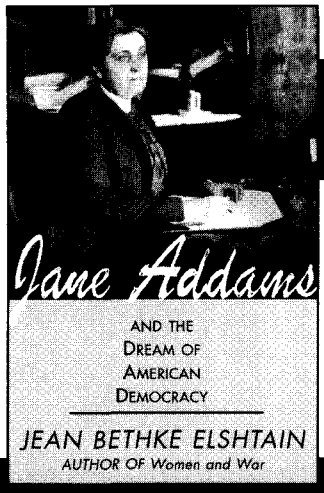

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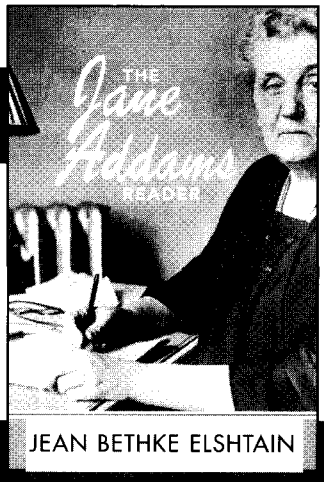

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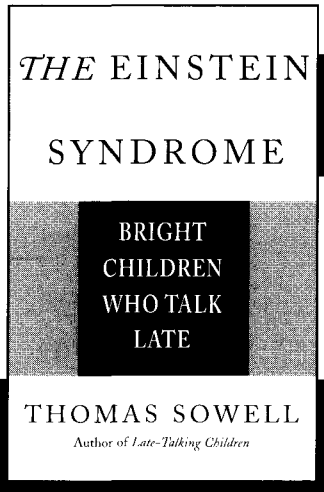

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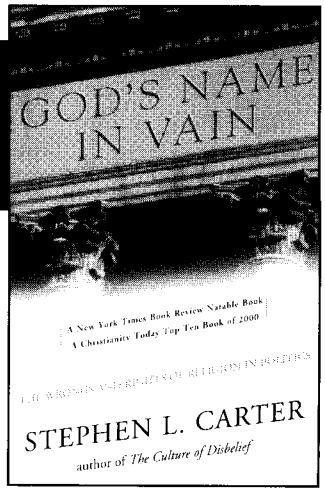
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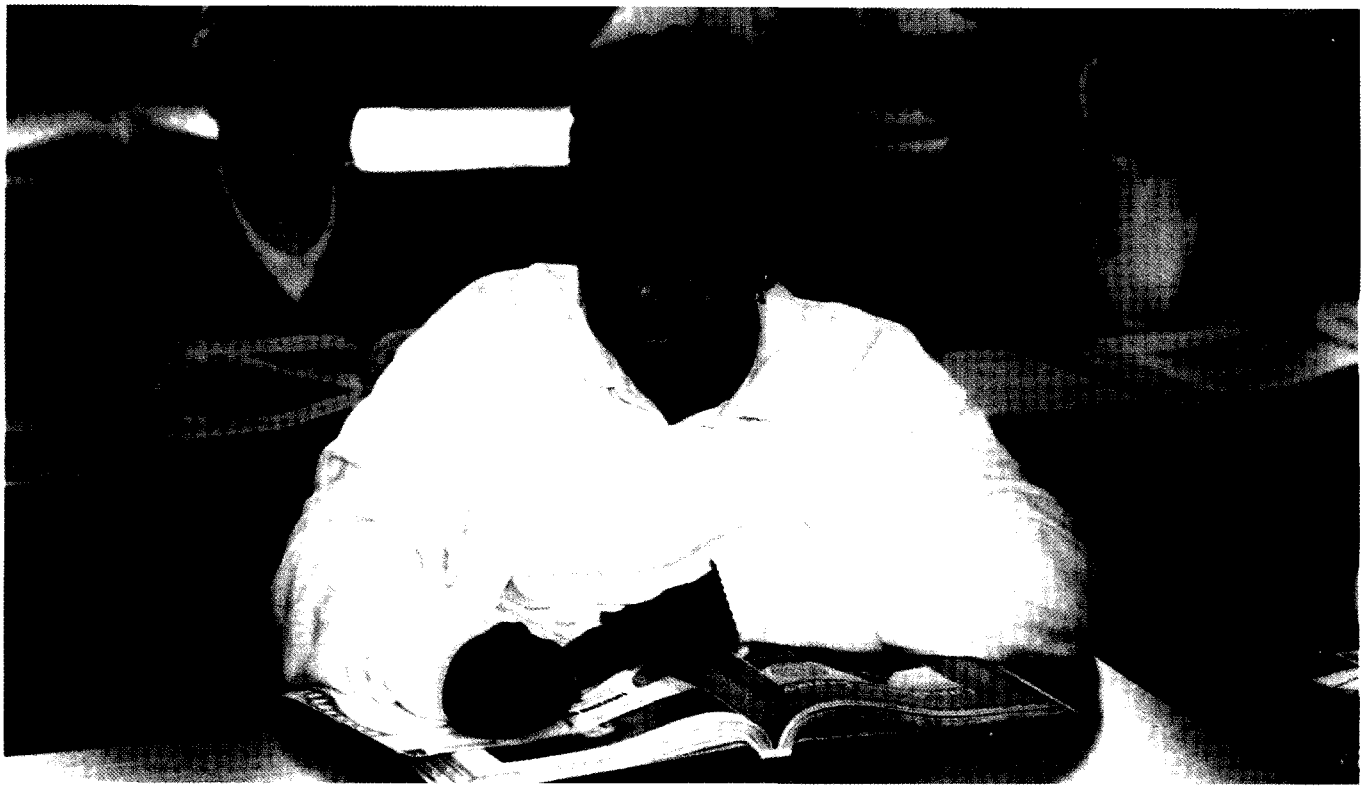

An Education System "In The Public Interest"

Community leaders in Milwaukee are redefining what "public education" means. As a result, traditional barriers to expanded educational opportunity are disappearing, especially for low-income parents.

Milwaukee's story epitomizes a vision identified by Dr. Kenneth Clark, a towering figure in American civil rights history. More than three decades ago, he told a conference on equal educational opportunity that "public education need not be identified with the present system of public schools." Rather, Dr. Clark said, it "can be more broadly and pragmatically defined [as] an education system which is in the public interest."

Parental School Choice is Widespread — Unless You're Poor.

To illustrate, the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) has a partnership with Holy Redeemer Christian Church to turn a vacant warehouse into a school with classrooms for both MPS and Holy Redeemer. The mostly African American students will share the gym, media center, swimming pool, and fine arts center. The plan includes a family counseling center and a Boys & Girls Club for after-school programs.

At La Escuela Principe de Paz, a private Catholic school in a largely Hispanic neighborhood, MPS is sharing the cost of an early childhood learning center. Had MPS built a separate facility, taxpayer costs would have been much higher. By collaborating, both parties came out ahead.

These partnerships produce schools "in the public interest." As the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* said in describing such developments, the "concept draws on something every adult is supposed to learn in kindergarten — sharing."

Such examples are everywhere in Milwaukee. Nearly a dozen community and faith-based groups have partnerships with MPS for new schools and expansion of existing facilities.

These include partnerships with such "private" community groups as the Silver Spring Neighborhood Center, Journey House, the Latino Community Center, Garden Homes Lutheran Church, Community Baptist Church, and the Lisbon Avenue Neighborhood Development Corporation.

State government plays a key role. Many schools working with MPS enroll students in Wisconsin's 11-year old voucher program for low-income families. Under a separate state program, city government and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee have chartered public schools that operate in partnership with groups such as the Urban League.

The net result is a substantial growth in educational options for Milwaukee parents. The Black Alliance for Educational Options salutes MPS, the City of Milwaukee, and the State of Wisconsin for creating these new choices. They truly are in the public interest.

baeo
Black Alliance for Educational Options

For more information go to: schoolchoiceinfo.org or baeo.org

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